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Short Studies  
of  
Familiar Bible Texts,

Mistranslated, Misinterpreted,  
and Misquoted,

✓  
By Blackford Condit, D. D.  
Author of "History of English Bible."

"Understandest thou what thou readest?" — *Acts viii: 30.*

Fleming H. Revell Company,

CHICAGO      ::      NEW YORK      ::      TORONTO

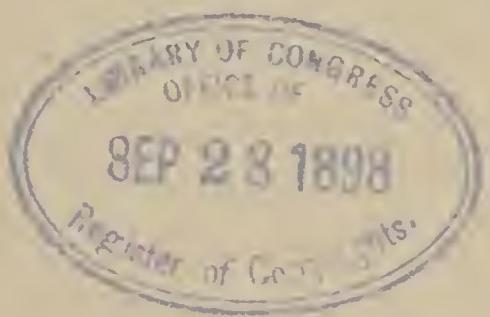
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To  
My Wife  
Whose aid has been invaluable to  
me In the Prosecution of these Studies  
This book is gratefully  
Dedicated.



## CORRIGENDA.

- Page 101, 15 lines from top, for agressive read aggressive.*
- Page 102, 5 lines from top, for phraze read phrase.*
- Page 105, 6 lines from top, for men read man.*
- Page 111, 8 lines from top, for thus read this.*
- Page 150, 9 lines from top, for man read many.*



## Introduction.

GENTLE READER:—In opening to you the door of this little volume, it is taken for granted that you are a friend of the Sacred Scriptures. Though possibly not among the offenders, yet you may be surprised at the seriousness of some of the offenses; especially, since they are traceable not to enemies, but to the friends of the Bible. Chief among these are the translators. The conscientious faithfulness of these, by way of eminence, the first among the friends of the Bible cannot be called in question, and yet every error in translation, however unintentional, is still an error, and, so far, is misleading. For this reason, Wycliffe with the aid of others, revised his first translation. Tyndale, eight years after the publication of his translation of the New Testament, issued a second edition carefully revised. This was done in 1534. Revision, for the sake of correcting errors, has been the watchword all along the line of English versions. In acknowledging *the good work* of those who had gone before them, the translators of the Authorized version, say in their address to the Reader; “Wee neuer thought . . . that we should neede to make a new Translation . . . but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principall good one.” The *preface* of the Revised version says; “Our task was revision not retranslation.” These

faithful friends of the Bible becoming aware of their own errors, or those of others, were diligent in seeking to remedy the wrong.

Next to the translators come the interpreters of the Scriptures. Historically they may be traced to the Christian fathers, and then to the Jewish rabbis. In their zeal for spiritualizing, they changed the plain statements of the Bible into allegories, and brought forth supposed hidden meanings, where no such meanings were intended. Unintentionally they thus robbed the Scriptures of their plain intent. All this, however, is largely a matter of the past. The crying evils of popular misinterpretations in our own day, are many. Often a passage is misunderstood because of an obsolete word. Then there is the mischievous habit of detaching a text from its connection, and giving it a meaning which the context will not justify. Another fruitful source, is, when by reading the New Testament into the Old Testament, the Suffering Savior is found where prophetically the Triumphant Redeemer is intended. (See especially pp. 83—86.) Still another, equally dishonoring to the Scriptures, is, where passages setting forth spiritual blessings to be realized in this world, are made to refer to the world to come. (See pp. 23, 24, 105, 106.) The term misinterpretation, therefore, is limited in these pages to these popular forms, which are widespread in their evil effects both to the individual reader and to the Bible as well.

But in no way, perhaps, is the Bible so dishonored

by its friends, as by the literal misquoting of its language. This evil is not of modern origin. These sayings, or would be quotations, are traditional, and come down to us from the obscurity of the past. They represent no halting words with uncertain sounds, but are firm in their step, and assume the authority of Scripture itself. Although originating in obscurity, they give evidence of springing from the most sacred associations. Curious enough, the literal correctness maintained in the quoting of these sayings proves them to be ingrained in the heart as well as in the memory. By their sacred use the abuse of the Scriptures becomes the more grievous, in that the Bible suffers the loss of the texts which these misquotations virtually displace.

In the first and second parts of these "Studies" there were no lack of helpers; and in each case proper recognition has been made. The third part, however, is comparatively a new field, or rather an old field but little worked. It grows cheat, in the midst of the wheat. And this cheat is garnered and used as pure wheat. Printed matter in respect to these misquotations was simply out of the question. Resort, therefore, was had to correspondence with several friends, and through their kindness and valuable aid my list of abused texts was materially increased.

And now the reader is left to himself. In conning these pages, doubtless, he not only will be surprised, but in some instances, highly indignant. To be unceremoniously deprived of a familiar text, especially

when it is accepted in a deep religious sense, and treasured up in the heart as sacred, is by no means pleasant. But in the wise words of an anonymous writer; “If they should feel unreconciled . . . it would be proper to remind them that no other sense of any passage of Scripture can be more precious, or more edifying than the true one.”

Strange to say a misquotation of the Bible may become, by familiar and long use, as sacred as the true reading. A good friend whose attention was called to the common misquotation of Micah iv: 4. (See page 141.) honestly confessed, that though the quotation was wrong, yet it was hard to give it up. The word “molest” seemed so comforting.

In the results reached, in respect to some of the passages in parts first and second, there may be room for honest differences of opinion. The wisest have differed and doubtless will continue to do so. All that is claimed for these “Short Studies,” in the few selected examples brought forward, is, a diligent and honest endeavor to set forth the true meaning and intent of each text considered.

*Terre Haute, Ind., Oct. 1897,*      THE AUTHOR.

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# Part I.

## Mistranslations.

“ Which thing only moved me to translate the New Testament. Because I had perceived by experience, how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth, except the scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue.”

—William Tyndale.

## Part I.

### Familiar Bible Texts Misunderstood on account of being Mistranslated.

EXODUS VI:2. *And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD.*

THE word LORD, here, represents the proper name Jehovah. It is a substitution rather than a translation. In the Septuagint it is rendered by *Kurios*, and in the Vulgate by *Dominus*. These are followed by the Authorized version as in our text. With but few exceptions it is so treated throughout the Authorized version. Unfortunately the Revised version 1885 though it adds more exceptions follows in the wake of its predecessors. The reason for this as given by the revisers in their *preface*, is, long established usage. It is comforting to know that the American committee would have had it otherwise, and would have inserted the word Jehovah wherever it occurred in the Hebrew text. (See R. V., *App.*)

It is true that the name Jehovah was to the Jews the “ineffable name.” Gesenius in his *Heb. Lex.*, says; “The later Hebrews, for several centuries before the Christian era, either misled by a false interpretation of certain laws (Ex. xx:7. Lev. xxiv:16), or following out some ancient superstition, regarded

this name as too sacred to be uttered, as the ineffable name which they scrupled even to pronounce." Josephus in his *Jewish Antiquities*, referring to Ex. iii:13-15, says; "Whereupon God declared to him (Moses) His holy name, which had never been discovered to men before; concerning which it is not lawful for me to say any more." To the Jews it was "the name of the four letters," the "unpronounceable name."

And yet Jehovah is God's memorial name. The latter clause of Ex. iii:15, reads; *This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.* It was this name that Moses was to give to the children of Israel, as proof of his commission to bring them forth out of Egypt. God was known to the patriarchs Ex. vi:3, as God Almighty, the All sufficient one, able to create, to uphold, and to establish covenants with far-reaching promises; but henceforth He is to be known as the I AM, the Self-Exist-ent and Omnipresent one, the Deliverer of His people.

There are German, also English and American scholars, who are persuaded that this memorial name should be spelled *Yaveh*, in that, it is nearer the Hebrew than Jehovah. But as yet, this is a question for the critical Biblical scholar; and not until a reasonable ground of agreement is reached, and the facts become familiar, can it be made a matter of popular interest.

This memorial name in whatever way it may be spelled, ought to be cherished by the Jews in all

their generations, on account of its essential characteristics. Some one has said; that "Jehovah is to the Old Testament, what Christ is to the New Testament." Not only so, but this Name is God's memorial, among the true Israel in all ages of the world. Besides, if in a limited degree we may read aright the prophecy contained in Rev. xix:11-16, it is this *JEHOVAH* of the Old, that becomes the *KING OF KINGS*, and *LORD OF LORDS*, of the New Testament. (See pp. 85, 86.)

Unlike the Jews who read the name Jehovah out of the text of their Bibles, we as Christians, are compelled with but few exceptions, to read it into the text of our Bibles, by means of the word *LORD*. Far better would it have been if the revisers of 1885 had heeded the suggestion of the American committee and inserted this ever-to-be-remembered-name Jehovah wherever it occurred in the Hebrew text.

*LEV. xviii:18. Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time.*

MORE than ordinary interest attaches itself to this text, in that it has been the battle ground of strife in regard to the vexed question of the marriage with a deceased wife's sister. There is no doubt, but that, by the obscurity of its language, the text admits of various interpretations. Some have thought that it even contains a prohibition of polygamy itself. This they would make to appear by adopting the words

of the margin “*one wife to another*,” instead of *a wife to her sister*. On critical grounds, however, the reading of the text is shown to be preferable to that of the margin. But the main contention confines itself to the above question. Those who claim that such marriages are forbidden, base it first, upon their interpretation of the text; second, upon the affinities naturally created by marriage; and third, upon Jewish law. Those who disclaim such prohibition, base their judgment first, upon the text itself; second, on the stout denial that Jewish laws have any authority over Christians; third, that practically they find no ground for the charge of immorality in such marriages. From the obscurity of the text it is not surprising that there should be diversity of views and no little perplexity, especially in the minds of unlearned readers. Such readers will find invaluable and authoritative help in rendering of the Revised version, which reads; *And thou shalt not take a woman to her sister, to be a rival to her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time.*

The plain scope of the passage, as here translated, is, that while it recognizes polygamy, under which practically bitter rivalries existed, yet it institutes a wise and beneficent provision by which two sisters should not at the same time become the wives of one man. Besides in the words, *in her life time*, there is implied that in case of death, there would be no hindrance to such marriage.

The passage thus understood affords no ground for

civil enactments against such marriages; neither any excuse for binding the consciences of Christians. I here would re-quote the significant words Dr. A. Roberts, a member of the British Committee on Revision. He was fully convinced that the passage sanctioned such marriages. He says: "It is simply a matter of regret and reproach, that English law has not yet acknowledged the validity of the marriages in question, while so much suffering and sorrow have followed in consequence." (See my *Hist. Eng. Bib.* 2d. ed. note, p. 478.) Says Michaelis, in his *Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*; "What Moses prohibited was merely *simultaneous polygamy* with two sisters; that sort of marriage in which Jacob lived when he married Rachel, as well as her sister Leah. The reason of this prohibition it is not difficult to discover. Sisters, in whom nature has implanted a principle of the strongest affection, are not to be made enemies to each other by polygamy." In a note, he adds; "The reason why marriage with a deceased wife's sister has been so generally understood to be forbidden, is, that Moses has prohibited marriage with a brother's widow; and expositors, in order to have it in their power to draw inferences from other prohibitions have maintained, that he not only prohibits the particular marriages specified in his law, but also those equally near in point of relationship." (See vol. II, p. 113, London, 1814.)

JUDGES xv:19. *But God clave an hollow place*

*that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day.*

THE words, *in the jaw*, of the first clause of this verse, may not be a mistranslation, but their introduction in this connection, to say the least, is unfortunate. In the account of the victory wrought by Samson with the jawbone of an ass, the efficiency of the weapon is so present to the imagination, that when it is said, *God clave a hollow place that was in the jaw*, almost every reader takes for granted that the “jawbone of an ass” is meant. But the word is the same as that which is translated *Lehi*, in the last clause. It should have been so rendered here, thus avoiding all ambiguity. True the correct word “*Lehi*” finds a place in the margin, yet few readers stop to correct the text by renderings of the margin, which are supposed to be less desirable.

The Revised version translates; *But God clave the hollow place that is in Lehi, and there came water thereout; . . . wherefore the name thereof was called En-hakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day.* It should be noted that the revisers place the words, “*the jawbone*,” in the margin. By so doing they indicate that this rendering is permissible. The explanation is that the words “*Lehi*” and “*the jaw*,” are different names for the same district of country. (See my *Hist. Eng. Bible*, 2nd ed. p. 478.) This possible interchangeable use of the words relieves

the translators of the Authorized version; yet it is clear that they ought to have used the same word in both instances.

We may apologize, as above, for our translators; but what shall be said of the rendering of the Vulgate, which reads; *Aperuit itaque Dominus molarem dentem in maxilla asini et egressae sunt ex eo aquae*. The jawbone of an ass is not only specified here but the place from which the water flowed is indicated as the hollow left by the breaking out of the molar tooth.

Perhaps we ought not to be surprised that Wycliffe, whose version 1380 was based upon the Vulgate, made the passage to read; *And so the Lord opnedc a woong (i. e. a grinder) tooth in the cheek boon of the asse, and watriis wenten out of it.*

The same remark might be made respecting the Douay version 1609–10, which is a very literal translation of the Vulgate. It reads; *Our Lord therfore opened a great tooth in the jawe of the asse, and there issued out of it waters.* The note attached leaves no possible doubt as to the meaning of the text, and is in part, as follows; “It was a greater miracle to draw water out of a drie bone, then out of the earth or stones.”

But we are, and ought to be, surprised at the reading of the Genevan version 1560 whose translators were scholarly men. This version reads; *Then God brake the cheeke tooth, that was in the jaw, and water came thereout . . .* It is too evident from this

rendering, that they were in sympathy with their Catholic brethren and believed in this “greater miracle.”

All Bible readers who adopt the Revised version, may be congratulated that there is no longer any occasion for falling into the miserable error of believing, that the jawbone of an ass, already so remarkable as an instrument of slaughter, should also become at one and the same time, a fountain and drinking cup from which Samson slaked his thirst.

I. SAMUEL x:24. *And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.*

FOR the last clause, *God save the king*, we have in the margin what proposes to be a literal translation of the Hebrew, and it reads; “*Let the king live.*” If this is true then the free rendering in our text, by inserting the word “God,” is most unwarrantable. By reference to the original text, the word “God” is not found in this connection. Gesenius in his *Heb. Lex.*, renders the words of the Hebrew; *Long live the king.* The Septuagint follows the Hebrew. The Vulgate does the same and simply reads; *Vivat rex.*

It may be a matter of interest to inquire when and by whom this rendering was first introduced into our English versions? Turning to Wycliffe’s Bible 1380 which was the first English translation of the whole

Bible, we find that this clause reads; *Lyue the kyng.* Next in regular line, is that of Coverdale's Bible 1535 and here we find the clause translated; *God saue the new kynge.* In other connections he uses the same freedom in translating, for example, III Kings i: 25 reads; *God saue the kynge Adonias.* In the same chapter, verses 34 and 39 read respectively; *God saue kynge Solomon.*

The reasons in the mind of Coverdale for taking such liberties with the Hebrew text, are not easily determined. In general it may be remarked, that just at this time, the most important question before the English people was the supremacy of Henry VIII in Church as well as in State. The conflict was with Rome. Among other important interests involved was the circulation of the Bible in the language of the people. This, the king favored. With such a defender against papal persecution, it is natural that the people should be elated, and should hold the king in the highest esteem. Appreciating somewhat the condition of public affairs, possibly we ought not to be surprised that Henry VIII is represented, in the title page of Coverdale's Bible, seated upon his throne, with one hand upon his sword, and with the other presenting a Bible to the Bishops. Again, possibly we ought not to be offended that in the dedication to the king, Coverdale should indulge in fulsome flattery, in comparing Henry VIII to "that noble and gracyous kynge, (Josias)." How far this loyal sentiment influenced the mind of Coverdale to make

so free a translation of this clause of our text, must be left to the judgment of the reader.

In tracing further the line of English versions, we find from the Genevan down, that they all follow Coverdale's example, excepting that each puts into the margin the literal translation of the Hebrew. The Authorized version 1611 follows in the same line, as seen in our text. The Revised version 1885 we are sorry to say, likewise, follows in the same line. Doubtless the revisers justified themselves by the authority of established usage. But usage, however long established, and whatever the occasion of its origin, cannot justify so great a wrong.

PSALM X:4. *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*

A better rendering of this second clause is found in the Genevan version 1516 which reads; *The wicked is so proud, that he seeketh not for God: he thinketh always, There is no God.* Practically the ungodly man is an atheist. He ignores the God of nature, of the Bible, and of his own soul. In his purposes and plans, he refuses to recognize God. Bishop Horne, in his valuable *Commentary on the Psalms*, translates the last clause; *all his imaginations are, There is no God.* At best, then, the proud atheistical life of the ungodly, is based upon a vain imagination. He tries to believe, *There is no God.* He builds upon an assumed negative. Deceived by prosperity he says; *I shall never be in adversity.*

The clause as translated in our text, *God is not in all his thoughts*, expresses a general truth, but the better rendering is; *All his thoughts are, There is no God.* The truth thus expressed is specific and particular. The Authorized version 1611 followed the Bishop's Bible 1568 which renders the passage; *The ungodly is so proude, that he careth not for God, neither is God in all his thoughtes.* But the Revised version 1885 goes back to the Genevan, and renders the clause; *All his thoughts are, There is no God.* In this the revisers did well, in that they were persuaded that this rendering was most in keeping with the original Hebrew.

PSALM XVII: 15. *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

To most readers the phrase *with thy likeness*, carries with it the idea of moral likeness; and so they understand the words as setting forth David's hope of a final resurrection, and his great satisfaction that he not only will see God, but that he will be like Him. This is a precious hope and from gospel teaching, it shall be realized. (See pp. 63, 64.) But is it the teaching of this passage? Dr. Alexander in his *Commentary* says; "The last word (*i. e.* likeness), does not mean *resemblance* in the abstract, but form, shape, or visable appearance." He translates the verse; *I in righteousness shall see thy face; I shall be satisfied in awaking with thy appearance.* The connection seems to demand this. The words of our text are a

part of the Psalmist's prayer. He prays to be delivered from men of the world, who have their portion in this life. They have much to enjoy, but he will not be moved by their prosperity. He will be satisfied with the realization of God's presence with its joy, peace and blessedness, whatever his own worldly surroundings may be. God's presence, with the light of His countenance, is a realization of present blessedness. In the experience of the Christian, as in the experience of David, there may be an awakening out of sleep, an opening of the eyes to present spiritual realities, which are healthful and satisfying.

"Some interpreters," says Calvin, "with more subtlety than propriety, restrict this to the resurrection at the last day, as if David did not expect to experience in his heart a blessed joy until the life to come. . . . I readily admit that this satisfaction . . . will not in all respects be perfect before the last coming of Christ; but as the saints, when God causes some rays of the knowledge of His love to enter into their hearts, find great enjoyment in the light thus communicated, David justly calls this peace or joy of the Holy Spirit *satisfaction*."

According to this view of the text, there ought to be a present satisfaction growing out of our waking up to the realization of God's presence. And this should be taken as an earnest, of what the full fruition of His presence shall be in the eternal world.

PSALM XXIII:4. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

THIS is a Psalm of Christian, as well as Hebrew life, in which the key-note is, childlike trust in Jehovah, who is the triumphant Redeemer of the New as well as the Old Testament. Saints in all ages have been encouraged by the inspiring words of this song. Not only in prosperity but in adversity true believers are comforted, especially, by the fourth verse. Though called in the vicissitudes of life to pass through real occasions of sorrow and danger, as well as shadows of fear, David's assurance may be our assurance, that the rod and staff of the good shepherd will guide us safely.

But too many mar the unity of the Psalm by interpreting this fourth verse as referring to the hour of death. This is true of the old commentators, Scott, Henry, and Horne. Especially the last who indulges his pen as follows; "To apprehend the scenery of this verse, we must conceive the church militant and the church triumphant, as two mountains, between which lieth the 'valley of the shadow of death' necessary to be passed by those, who would go from one to the other." The whole exposition is clothed in this highly imaginative dress. Singularly enough in this, the good bishop offends against his own ideal of interpretation, as set forth in his *preface*, that no exposition of a passage should be attempted before the interpreter "hath attained its literal meaning." That

such exposition may be “pious and true but foreign to the text.” It should be remarked that he is speaking here, especially, of the abuse of the spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures. The proper use of such interpretations he justly defends.

Instead of allowing the leading thought of the Psalm to give character and right interpretation to the text, by almost universal consent the text is allowed to give character to the Psalm. By such interpretation also, this verse becomes a death bed verse, as its words are the last breathed into the ear of the dying saint. And all most contrary to the Psalmist’s intention, and also to the teaching of experience, since it is in the midst of life’s fightings and fears, that the believer needs the confidence here inspired.

The occasion of this misunderstanding to the English reader, comes through a slight mistranslation of two or three words of the text. *Yea, though I walk,* Dr. J. A. Alexander translates, *Also when I walk,* and remarks; “The *also* shows that something new is to be added; . . . The common version (*yea, though I walk*) is too indefinite and hypothetical.” Again he says; “The common version, *shadow of death*, conveys more than the original, and fails to reproduce its compound form.” His rendering of the Hebrew word is, *Death—shade*. Calvin also renders it *deadly shade*, in the sense of a place of “imminent danger.” While the rendering of the Genevan version 1560 is in common with our text yet

it explains by a short note; "Though he were to be in danger of death, as the sheepe that wandreth in the darke valley without his shepheard," he would fear no evil. Delitzsch commenting on the meaning of this word says; "It signifies the shadow of death as an epithet of the most fearful darkness . . . especially of darkness such as makes itself felt in a wild, uninhabited desert, Jer. ii:6." He further remarks in this connection; "This rod and staff in the hand of God comfort him, (David) *i. e.*, preserve to him the feeling of security, and therefore a cheerful spirit. Even when he passes through a valley dark and gloomy as the shadow of death, where surprises and calamities of every kind threaten him he fears no misfortune."

John Bunyan, the master of the Scriptures in their relation to Christian experience, locates this dark valley not at the close of the pilgrim's way, but in the very midst of it. After his fight with Apollyon in the "Valley of Humiliation," Christian is made to enter the "Valley of the Shadow of Death." The way here was dark and narrow, and "he was beset with fears and dangers beyond all his former experiences." But ere long "he thought he heard the voice of a man as going before him, saying, "'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no ill, for Thou art with me.'" Because of these words he was cheered, and the sun arose. The author significantly adds; "In this light therefore he came to the end of the valley."

Our text, then, correctly translated, shall be found to be in harmony with the whole Psalm. The Psalmist would inspire believers with confidence to trust Jehovah in adversity as well as in prosperity. By his gentle providence God guides His children, even as the shepherd guides his sheep, by his staff and crook, safely through real and imaginary dangers. With this interpretation the Psalm without a break, is a song of confidence, and fitly closes with the bold refrain; *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

After all that can be said, however, suffer this Psalm with its inspiring faith, to minister to the wants of the soul in the last moments of its life. But confine it not here, let it go forth in its strength and beauty to minister to the living while yet in the midst of life's conflict.

PSALM XXXVII:35. *I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.*

*36, Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him but he could not be found.*

THE contrast, throughout this whole Psalm, is between the estate of the righteous and that of the wicked. And the Psalmist makes it plain that the prosperity of the merely worldly man, however great, ought not be made the occasion of envy.

If the bay tree of the text, is one with the laurel, as many suppose, then it fulfills the demands of the

comparison to modern readers, at least, since it is attractive in its appearance, and is associated with nobility and glory. In some climates the tree grows to a tall and commanding height. But not so in Palestine, where it is said to be quite uncommon, and to attain, comparatively, to a small size. So that the association of the laurel with royal pomp, could not have been present to the mind of David, however appropriate and significant it may be to us.

The Septuagint has; *Kedrous tou Libanou*. This is followed by the Vulgate which reads; *Cedros Libani*. But the word in the original means, according to Gesenius in his *Heb. Lex.*, “A native tree, growing in its native soil, not transplanted.” Jewish doctors are said to have understood the Hebrew to signify, simply, “a native tree;” that is “a tree which grows in its own native soil.” But the translators of our text, somewhat doubtful as to the true meaning, introduced the preferable reading in the margin, which reads; “*A green tree that groweth in his own soil.*”

In a landscape, a flourishing tree that towers above its fellows, attracts attention, and forms a picture in the mind of the passer-by. David doubtless had observed and admired such trees. So when he says; *I have seen the wicked in great power, And spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil*, possibly it was Saul, he had in mind. *For there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he.* Like a tall flourishing tree, Saul stood head and

shoulders above any of his people. Although a mere supposition, yet from existing similarities, it seems quite natural to think that the man should suggest the tree, and the tree suggest the man. When first introduced by Samuel as king, Saul by his extraordinary stature and noble presence, commanded the admiration of the people, and they shouted; *Let the king live.*

But there came a change. Flattered by successes in war, and surrounded by all that could minister to royal pride, by his wicked and ignoble acts, Saul rendered himself an object of pity rather than envy. Waxing worse and worse, deserted of God, reproved by the prophet, who forewarned him of his death, like a fallen monarch of the wood, to the passer-by, *lo, he was not.* From the above considerations, the translation of the Revised version is preferable, which reads; *I have seen the wicked in great power, And spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil.* By this rendering the demand of the Hebrew text is met, as well as that of the comparison which runs through the whole Psalm.

ISAIAH LV:4. *Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.*

WE have in this text an illustration of the misleading power of a single word. The passage is doubtless prophetic, and looks forward to the coming of the Messiah; but to whom shall He come? It would seem

from the text that the promise was limited to the Jews. The very next verse, however, declares; *Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee.* The connection therefore, plainly indicates that the promise is to the Gentiles; besides, the correct rendering of the original makes this certain. The Septuagint translates, *ethnesin*, and the Vulgate, *gentibus*; in each case the Hebrew word means *peoples*. The Revised version rightly reads; *Behold I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples.* Thus by the mistranslation of a single word an important prophecy is obscured.

Too much stress cannot be laid upon this one example; but it will be found that the word *people* is uniformly used in the Old Testament of the Authorized version, whether or not the reference is to the Jews or to the Gentiles. By such usage serious confusion has been introduced into many prophetic passages, in which the English reader is hopelessly in the dark as to the correct interpretation. The Revised version 1885 in its *preface* says; “The word ‘peoples’ was nowhere used by the King James’s Translators in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament it occurs only twice (Rev. x. 11, xvii. 15). The effect of this was to leave the rendering of numerous passages inadequate or obscure or even positively misleading.” The English reader of the Bible is under unspeakable obligation to the revisers of the Old Testament for bringing out the meaning of the

original and thus making clear this distinction. With the consent of the reader I would here cite a few examples from my *Hist. of the Eng. Bible*, p. 470, 2nd ed., to show this existing confusion, and how the revisers dispelled it. "If a blessing or a curse is pronounced, we know upon whom it falls, whether upon God's chosen people or upon the peoples or nations without. In Isaiah viii: 9, we read in the Authorized version, 'Associate yourselves, O ye *people*, and ye shall be broken in pieces.' This would seem to be a threatening against the Jews. But according to the Hebrew, and in the Revised version it reads: 'Make an uproar, O ye *peoples*, and ye shall be broken in pieces . . . Take counsel together, and it shall be brought to nought: . . . for God is with us.' Instead of a threatening, it becomes a pledge of protection to God's chosen people. So in Isaiah xiv: 6, the Authorized version reads; 'He who smote the *people* in wrath.' This would seem to refer to the Jews. But the Revised version reads; 'That smote the *peoples* in wrath.' Thus making it clear that the Gentiles are intended." Other examples might be cited, but the above will suffice to show the importance of the right rendering of a single word. We can scarcely estimate this importance to the English reader if he cares at all to understand the bearing of prophecy upon the Gentiles and also upon the Jews. A prophetic promise or threatening is too serious and far-reaching to be lightly passed over.

MATTHEW VI: 13. *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

Is the second clause of this verse a mistranslation? The rendering of the Revised version, *but deliver us from the evil one*, gives, as it would seem, the answer in the affirmative. Then the reputation of the English company for conservatism, and the acknowledged scholarship of both the English and American committees, together with their faithful and conscientious labors, all strongly favor the wisdom of the change. But a thorough examination of the grounds for making it, may reveal that there are not only two sides to the question, but possibly, the preponderance of evidence may favor the correctness of our passage.

There is no doubt but that the revisers had the authority of the original, so far as the Greek form of the word is concerned. The same is equally true in respect to the translators of the Authorized version. For, as a matter of fact, the Greek adjective may be treated as a neuter, as in our text, or as a masculine, as in the Revised version. So Dr. Robinson states in his *Gr. Lex. of N. T.* The Greek adjective itself therefore, decides nothing.

A more plausible claim for the change, is that New Testament usage sanctions it. In many cases it certainly does. But after examining the passages it may be said also, that in many other cases it does not. When the Greek adjective appears in the critical text of Westcott and Hort, the Revised ver-

sion, almost without exception, translates, *the evil one*. The Authorized version, however, makes several exceptions. Alford, in his *N. T. for Eng. Readers*, does not agree with either of them. This lack of uniformity in dealing with this single word, makes the argument from New Testament usage, less convincing than it might otherwise be. It is evident that the use of this adjective as a masculine, or as a neuter, is dependent upon the connection. No one could object to the translation of the Revised version of I John ii:13, which reads; *because ye have overcome the evil one*; but many would hesitate to follow its rendering of I John v:19, which reads; *and the whole world lieth in the evil one*. Much better the rendering of this clause in the Authorized version, which treats the word as a neuter, and reads; *and the whole world lieth in wickedness*.

But another important claim favoring the rendering, *the evil one*, in the passage, is that it carries with it a depth of meaning not found in the simple word *evil*. Dr. Schaff, in *The International Revision Commentary*, in approving the change to *the evil one*, says; "It goes to the root of the matter." It is true that by this rendering, the petitioner is brought face to face with a personality. And yet the depth of the petition, *deliver us from evil*, is a question for individual Christian consciousness to decide. And it must be that each petitioner, in his spiritual conflict with the powers of darkness, in offering this petition, understands it to mean *all evil*, comprising not only

physical but moral and spiritual, commensurate with the evils of *death* and of *life*, of *things present* and of *things to come*.

Alford in advocating the rendering the petition, *deliver us from evil*, says; "The adjective here is certainly neuter; the introduction of the mention of the 'evil one' would seem here to be incongruous." Lange remarks; "If by *pōeron* the power of darkness is meant, as manifested in the kingdom of darkness, it would include not only that kingdom itself, but also its author, and even its outward and temporal consequences. Such is undoubtedly the meaning of the text."

According to Olshausen, the masculine is more agreeable to Bible usage, yet he thinks that it is a matter of indifference which is taken, "provided the neuter is regarded as including all that is wicked and evil, according to which notion it is Satan's very element." Bengel remarks: "Better as our version (German) *from evil* in general, in its widest sense."

As having an important bearing on the question the remark of Stier, in his *Words of the Lord Jesus*, is worthy of consideration. He says in substance; There is nothing personal in the whole of the second part of the prayer. The Greek word for *evil* must correspond with the Greek words for *bread*, *trespass*, *temptation*. From this we may justly conclude that the introducing the name of *the evil one* would destroy the harmony of the several petitions. Whatever prepossessions therefore, may have been enter-

tained for the reading of the Revised version, this suggestion with the other considerations above, strongly favor the correctness of the translation of our text.

MATTHEW xxiii: 24. *Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.*

THE words, *strain at*, are either a mistranslation or a blunder of the printer. This rendering is found first, in the Authorized version 1611. The Bishop's Bible 1568, and the earlier English versions, including Tyndale 1526, all read; *strayne out*. There is one exception, however, the Rheims version 1582 translates; *straine a gnat*. There is no typographical error here, and possibly there may be none in the Authorized version. Our translators have at least one defender in Alford, who in his *Commentary*, 1872, wrote; "The 'strain *at* a gnat,' in our present auth. vers. for 'strain *out* a gnat,'" of the early English vss., seems not to have been a mistake, as sometimes supposed, but a deliberate alteration, meaning, 'strain (out the wine) at (the occurrence of) a gnat.'" Dr. Schaff intimates in his *Inter. Nat. Com.*, 1882, that Alford had changed his views and corrected this explanation. (See note, *in loco*.) Whether this phrase is a mistranslation, or an error of the printer, it certainly obscures the meaning. The word "strain" connected with the word "out" has a well defined meaning, which suits the connection. But with the word "at," it has quite a different signification. In wrest-

ling with this difficulty, Matthew Henry, *in loco*, curiously remarks; "In their practice they (the Pharisees) strained at gnats, heaved at them, with seeming dread." The word "heaved" is quite as hard to explain in this connection, as the word *strain*.

As the clause reads, whatever the explanation of the phrase, *strain at*, the force of the comparison is confined to the size of the animals. But there is an additional underlying idea of ceremonial defilement, which adds greatly to the meaning. And here the translators are plainly at fault. In the original it is not *a gnat*, but *the gnat*. The Revised version correctly renders the clause; *strain out the gnat and swallow the camel*. By which we are to understand that it was not an ordinary gnat, but a wine fly, an animalcule, that breeds in wine. To swallow this was supposed by the Pharisees to be a violation of Lev. xi:20, 23, 41, 42. According to Lange; The Jews strained the wine in order to avoid drinking an unclean animal. The statement of straining out the gnat (wine fly) is in no sense hypothetical, but founded on a Jewish custom, in order to avoid defilement. And herein lies the deeper meaning which brings out the force of the comparison. Dr. Schaff says; "The camel was the largest of the impure animals forbidden for food (Lev. xi:4), as the gnat was the smallest. What was impossible literally, is only too possible figuratively. The reality of Pharisaic sin exceeded the figure." (See *Inter. Rev. Com.*)

Our passage thus understood is relieved of ambi-

guity. In following the tradition of the elders, the Pharisees took great credit to themselves in avoiding the least possible occasion of ceremonial defilement. But in following their own inclinations, they did not hesitate to set aside not only the ceremonial but the moral law, and to indulge in the most heinous sins.

JOHN v:39. *Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

SHALL the Greek term for the word *search* be construed, as here, in the imperative, or, as many prefer, in the indicative? and read; *Ye search the Scriptures.* As to the preferable rendering, authorities are divided. In the face of able scholars who have made the Greek of the New Testament a lifelong study, it must be that, a certain American clergyman was very bold when he declared from his pulpit (as is currently reported in the daily press) that, "Christ did not say to the Jews, 'Search the Scriptures.'" Every Bible student, however, after carefully weighing the evidences, may in due scholarly humility accept and defend one or the other of these interpretations.

Those who render the Greek as an imperative, think they find ample ground, in the example of the Greek fathers, whom they assert ought to be authority in the matter of their own language. They urge that Cyril, of Alexandria, was the only exception, as all the others construed the word in the imperative. Again it is claimed, specially by Alford that, "the *impera-*

tive sense only will be found to cohere with the previous verses. . . . And no other sense will suit the word *search*, which cannot be used, as in the indicative it would be, with blame attached to it,—‘*ye make nice and frivolous search into the letter of the Scripture;*’ but implies a thorough search (see also I Pet. i. 11) *into the contents and spirit of Scripture.*”

On the contrary those who render the word in the indicative and read; *Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life,* are equally confident that it is demanded by the connection. Bengal, *in loco*, quoting Brent, says; “That there are very judicious interpreters who adopt the indicative; and the whole structure of the discourse certainly confirms it: com. ver. 33, etc., and especially, *because ye think.*” This is the reason for their searching. They did not need the command; for as a matter of fact, the Jews were already diligent in the study of their sacred writings. Besides had Christ intended a command, he would not have added the above reason, but would have given instructions as to the right mode of searching. Or, according to Lange, *in loco*, “Had He intended to *exhort* the Jews to search the Scriptures, He would not have continued: ‘for *in them ye think . . . but:* ‘*through them ye have, or rather, shall have—eternal life;*’ nor would He have added: ‘*And they are they which testify of Me,*’ but ‘*for*;’ this being the reason why they should study the Scriptures.” Evidently the connection favors the indicative. “Thus viewed,”

says Olshausen; “the passage takes its place in the connection with less ambiguity.” We welcome, therefore, the rendering of the Revised version 1881 which reads; *Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me.*

JOHN XVI:8. *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*

IN this text, we have an example, not uncommon in the Authorized version, in which the preferable rendering is put in the margin, which reads; “*convince.*” Robinson’s *Gr. Lex.* gives as a second meaning; “to admonish, reprove, rebuke;” but as a first meaning it gives; “to convince, to convict.” Doubtless, “to convict” comes nearer to the correct reading in this connection. The importance of the right rendering of this Greek word, can scarcely be overestimated, when we realize its bearing upon the essential work of the Holy Spirit as set forth in the words of the Savior. Alford wisely says; “It is difficult to give in one word the deep meaning of the original term: ‘convince,’ approaches perhaps, near to it, but does not express the double sense, which is manifestly here intended—of a *convincing* unto salvation, and a *convicting* unto condemnation:—‘reprove’ is far too weak, conveying merely the idea of an outward rebuke, whereas this reaches into the heart, and works inwardly in both the above-mentioned ways.”

The following comment from Lücke is also quoted and indorsed: “‘The testimony of the Holy Ghost in behalf of Christ as opposed to the unbelieving world (ch. xv:26) is essentially a *refutation*, a demonstration of its wrong and error.’” Something of this idea of refuting and demonstrating, is involved in the translation of the Rheims version 1582 which reads; *And when he is come, he shal argue the world of sinne, and of justice, and of judgement.* The Revised version 1881 reads; *And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* This seems to be the most desirable rendering since the work of convicting involves that of convincing.

ACTS X. I. THERE was a certain man in Cœsarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band.

DR. EADIE, in his *Hist. Eng. Bible*, II. 367, illustrates the possible confusion in the meaning of the last clause of this verse, by citing the case of an English preacher,—whose denomination was not characterized for its high standard of education,—who sought to show from this text “the power of divine grace in the conversion of Cornelius. For first, he was a soldier, and military life is not favourable to piety, and, secondly, he was a leader of a band or company of foreign musicians, enlarging eloquently on the character of opera singers, many of whom still come from Italy.”

How far this English preacher was justified in allowing himself to be led astray by the ambiguity of the phrase, *Italian band*, we may not determine; nevertheless, it is true, that the ordinary reader, either in reading or hearing the Bible read, is dependent for his apprehension of the meaning of any given passage, upon the plain and modern meaning of the words.

Dr. Edward Robinson in his *Gr. N. T. Lex.*, defines the term *speires* to mean; "Roman foot soldiers, prob. a cohort." The Vulgate renders it *cohortis*. Tyndale 1534 translates; *a captayne of the soudiers of Italy*; and is followed by Cranmer 1539. The Genevan version 1557 reads; *A captayne of the soudiers called the Italian bande*. The Rheims version 1582 reads; *Centurion of that which is called the Italian band*; and is followed almost literally by our Authorized version, as above. It must be said that the Revised version 1881 did very little toward the removing the obscurity of this passage, since it only introduces the word "*cohort*" in the margin, as a possible rendering. How much better for the sake of the ordinary reader to have adopted Dr. Robinson's definition; or to have followed Tyndale's translation. "A version," says Dr. Eadie in his *Hist. Eng. Bible*, "ought never, if possible, to present to the ordinary reader a doubtful sense . . . . His question is not what means the Greek text, but what mean those English words?"

"The centurion," says Meyer, *in loco*, "was of the

*Italian cohort, which, stationed at Caesarea consisted of Italians, not natives of the country, like many other Roman troops in Syria."*

*ACTS XVII: 23. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.*

PAUL's presence in Athens constitutes an epoch in the history of the early planting of Christianity. We need to study therefore, his every movement and word, in this account as given by the writer. Landing at Athens as Paul's custom was, he entered the synagogue, where he reasoned with the Jews and devout persons. Next, we meet him in the market-place or Agora, where the Athenians and strangers gathered to tell, or to hear some new thing. Here he came in contact not only with philosophers but with the rabble; some of whom denounced him as a babbler, because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. From here, they brought him to the Areopagus, the open court of the judges, with it's stone benches, situated on the summit of Mars' Hill. It was in this court, in the presence of the most learned assembly of Athens, that Paul delivered this remarkable speech, which shows not only the skill of the orator but the faithfulness of the preacher.

By reason of the mistranslation of several words in this account, the delicate portraiture, as drawn by the writer, is somewhat marred and so far obscured,

The 16th verse preceding our text, reads; . . . *his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.* In a general sense this was true; but the original does not say this. A better translation is, *his spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city full of idols.* Says Hackett in his *Commentary*; “The epithet applies to the city, not directly to the inhabitants.” He further adds in this connection; “A person could hardly take his position at any point in ancient Athens, where the eye did not range over temples, altars, and statues of the gods almost without number.”

In the 22nd verse, the phrase *too superstitious*, now understood wholly in a bad sense, is misleading. Paul did not wish to stigmatize the disposition of the Athenians to worship, as something unworthy, which would have been to excite unnecessarily the wrath of his hearers. Alford renders the word “*very religious*,” and wisely adds; “To understand this word as A. V., ‘*too superstitious*’ is to miss the fine and delicate tact of the speech, by which he at once parries the charge against him, and in so doing introduces the great Truth which he came to preach.”

So likewise the phrase in our text, *your devotions*, conveys a wrong impression. Paul did not say, he beheld the Athenians worshiping at their altars, but rather, he beheld *the objects of their worship.* This harmonizes with the 16th verse, where, as in the Revised version it reads; *His (Paul's) spirit was provoked within him, as he beheld the city full of*

*idols.* Besides it makes our passage harmonious throughout, which in the Revised version reads; *For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.* Neither did Paul condemn this inscription, but seized upon it as an opportune text to direct the religious tendency of the Athenian mind, and thus lead to a knowledge of the one and only true God.

By the discreet words of the Apostle as above explained, he was permitted to declare some of the fundamental truths of Christianity. But when he came to speak of the judgment and the resurrection; some mocked, while others by way of apology for the interruption, said; *We will hear thee again of this matter.* So, it is recorded, *Paul departed from among them.* It would be fruitless to speculate what might have been, if these representative men of Athens had accepted the teachings of the Apostle. This *if* must ever stand prominent among the many great *ifs* of Ecclesiastical History.

ACTS xxvi:28. *Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*

THIS passage is remarkable for its sacred associations. Few texts were so often used as this, in the revival services of years gone by. To many, it brings to mind the crisp cold nights, the warm basement, or the crowded upper room of the church, where the atmosphere was aglow with true religious feeling.

To such persons therefore any intimation that this text is not correctly translated, or has anything wrong about it, so violates these sacred memories, that it is met with a deep heartfelt resentment. It is as if violent hands were being laid upon the very word of life itself.

And yet it may be that our interest centers in the associations rather than in any religious excellence of the text. And possibly the passage may be found to be most remarkable for its irreligiousness. As a matter of fact, the words are the words of a man. Inspiration in this case, as well as all others, where men or devils are introduced in the Bible as speakers, is not responsible for the truth or falseness of their utterances. Though this passage is in the Bible, it is not of the Bible. It cannot be quoted as God's word, but only man's word. Doubtless the dishonesty of these words, will become more evident from the translation of the Revised version, which reads; *And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian.*

According to this version, the apparent sincerity of Agrippa's confession, that Paul's appeal had touched his heart, disappears. Instead of confessing that he was *almost persuaded*, he resents the sober words of the Apostle, and with a light jest, says; *With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian.* Thus with jest, or as some think sarcasm, (See Myer, *in loco,*) Agrippa holds up Paul to the contempt of those present in the court, for his relig-

ious zeal in thinking to win him over so very easily to Christianity. In Agrippa's words therefore, we find nothing to command our respect. And we ought to be thankful that the Revised version, by its faithfulness to the Greek text, brings out the true intent of Agrippa's sarcastic reply to Paul.

Many persons in their religious experience, are brought face to face with the question, as to whether or not they will yield absolute submission to the will of God. At such critical periods, they need solemn warnings. As to this text, however, if it were ever appropriate, it, is so no longer, by reason of the correct translation above. Agrippa's insincerity as a man, and his contemptuous dealings with the sober words of the Apostle, in the above connection, render him a most unhappy example to be held up to those who are honest in their feelings, and who are almost persuaded to become Christians.

*ROMANS III:4. God forbid: yea, let God be true,  
but every man a liar; . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .*

THE first clause in this text presents an illustration, and there are many in our English Bible, in which the word God is needlessly introduced, since it has no place in the original. In the Greek, the words are, *me genoito*. These are rendered in the Latin, by *absit*; and this in turn, in Wycliffe's earlier version, by *Fer be it*. But in his later version, which was done by another hand, we have;

*God forbede.* And this is followed by Tyndale 1525 by Coverdale 1535 and so along the whole line, including, I am sorry to be compelled to add, our late Revised version.

In a text note in Lange, Dr. Philip Schaff, one of the editors, says; "The *God forbid* of the Authorized Version . . . is almost profane. . . . Remember the third commandment, as explained by Christ, Matt. v: 34." Dr. Charles Hodge, in his *Commentary on Romans*, remarks; "These words, which occur so often in our version, are a most unhappy rendering of the original, which means simply *let it not be*, equivalent, therefore, to *by no means*, or *far from it*. . . . The Scriptures do not authorize such a use of the name of God, as this phrase shows to have been common among the English translators of the Bible." Alford *in loco* says; "literally, *let it not be*." But in chapter vi: 2, singularly enough, he adds; "*God forbid* is the only adequate rendering of the expression in the original, *let it not be*." The occasion, he thinks is "solemn enough" to justify the use of the word *God*. But evidently the Apostle Paul did not think so, since he uses the same words in both connections, which mean simply, *let it not be*.

Early English is remarkable for its simplicity. Bible language is doubly so, since this characteristic belongs to the original text also to the English language at the time the Authorized version was made. But the tendency has been, and still is, to use strong terms for the sake of emphasis; a false idea

that often defeats its own end. This is doubtless true in the case before us. Other examples might be added to show that our translators erred in this direction. No one can understand this better than did the authors of our late Revised version. And in many instances, they did not hesitate to make the necessary changes. By way of illustration take a single example, that of the word *damnation*, which occurs so often in the Authorized version, and grates so harshly on the ear. Thanks to the revisers, this word is banished, and the word *condemnation* is made to take its place. This latter term far better renders the meaning of the Greek term, *krima*. While Bible readers, therefore, are under great obligation to the revisers for this, and a number of like changes, the pertinent question remains; why did they not change this objectionable phrase, *God forbid*, of our text? To have done this would have been to relieve the Scriptures from a coarseness, that is not permitted even in ordinary speech. Then it would have been an act of justice to the Apostle by relieving him from the apparently just charge of using this objectionable phrase. Besides the change would have been in the interest of simplicity in language, and so far, of strength of expression. And withal, it would have removed the apparent Scripture authority for the use of such language by ministers, and others as well, when the occasion would seem to justify it.

**ROMANS XIII:1.** *I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

THIS is certainly a familiar passage but not one that can be said to be abused, from the fact that it is so little used. The Apostle placed a very high estimate upon this exhortation, since he introduced it with the warm words; *I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God.* Again from the plainness of the words there seems no difficulty in understanding the teaching. But carefully considered, there is ambiguity in the phrase *reasonable service.* It may mean rational service opposed to that which is carnal or fleshly, as explained by Alford. Or it may mean, agreeable to reason, and thus the service would be in accordance with the dictates of reason. Calvin explains the phrase *reasonable service* as "the right service of God." That is, to serve God from the heart.

But ought not the word to have been translated *spiritual* instead of *reasonable?* By referring to the *appendix* of the late Revised version of the N. T., we find the word so rendered. The *appendix* reads; "For 'reasonable' read 'spiritual' with marg. Gr. *belonging to reason.*" The British revisers complied in part with this request, by placing the word "spiritual" in the margin. And so far, we have their judgment that it may have a place in the text. By such rendering all ambiguity found in the word

*reasonable* is removed. Besides it harmonizes with the scope of the passage. This spiritual service therefore becomes an act of worship. Strivings through prayer for purity of heart are comparatively in vain so long as the eye, the tongue, the hand, and the foot are left to run riot. The sacrificial devoting to death of sinful acts as manifested through the members of the body, is the living sacrifice intended, and this can only be real by being spiritual. Says Meyer, *in loco*, "Paul is glancing at the *thank-offering*, . . . and raises the notion of sacrifice to the highest moral idea of self-surrender to God."

In the Old Testament economy, the body of a beast was presented as a whole burnt offering; in the New Testament economy, the body of the worshiper is to be offered that it may be purified as by fire. In the Old, the act of worship was largely symbolical; in the New, it is real. The offerings of the Old Testament were acceptable to Jehovah, when made in the right spirit; this living sacrifice of the New Testament, which is your spiritual service, is holy and acceptable unto God.

I. COR. III:9. *For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.*

THE first clause of this verse is commonly understood, or rather misunderstood, as setting forth the exalted dignity of the Christian ministry. From *labourers together with God*, the thought grows into co-laborers, co-workers and co-partners in the same

work. But from the context the teaching of the Apostle seems to be the very opposite. In the seventh verse, he says; *So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.* Mr. Barnes earnestly combats this idea of joint work. He contends that it is not in the Greek, and further that there is no parallel passage "that speaks of God's operating *jointly* with his creatures in producing the *same* result." From the scope of the passage Mr. Barnes thinks;—"The idea is, that of depressing or humbling the apostles, and of exalting God; and this idea would not be consistent with the interpretation that they were *joint* labourers with him."

There is no doubt but that the rendering of this phrase in the text, is ambiguous. It is a matter of interest to know that this translation is peculiar to our present Authorized version. Tyndale 1534 renders the phrase, *goddis labourers*; and is followed by Cranmer 1539 Geneva 1557 and the Rheims 1582. The last reads; *God's coadiutors*. Thus leaving the Authorized version 1611 to translate; *For we are labourers together with God.* The Revised version 1881 translates; *For we are God's fellow-workers;* while Calvin translates, *fellow-labourers.* In the matter of interpretation, he takes a middle ground, and says: "He (God) calls forth ministers to be *fellow-labourers*, by means of whom He alone works; but, at the same time, in such a way, that they in their turn labour in common with him." Hodge, as

quoted by Lange, "combines the two ideas." Lange further remarks: "God's helpers, who work with God—not: who do God's work associatedly (as Ols hausen)." Again he says; "taking the whole context . . . and considering the aim of the whole paragraph, we might suppose with Chrysostom, that in the repeated mention of God in the last clause there was an implied rebuke of the tendency in the Church to call themselves after men." In the same connection he adds; "(Though indeed, it must be said that the design of the argument is not to dignify the teachers, but to abate the excessive estimate put upon them.)"

As an example of honest dealing with the Scriptures, I have it on the authority of Rev. Joseph F. Tuttle, D. D., L. L. D. now President Emeritus of Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Ind., that the late Rev. Dr. Henry Smith, while Professor of Sacred Rhetoric, in Lane Theological Seminary at Cincinnati, O., a man remarkable for his learning, as well as for his pulpit ability, prepared a sermon on this text. The subject was in the line of his work, and led away by the phrase *labourers together with God*, he emphasized the dignity of the ministerial calling. It was a favorite sermon and met with great favor among his ministerial brethren as well as among laymen. But when his interpretation of the text was called in question, by a friend, he expressed surprise, and said he would re-examine the text. The result was that he never preached the sermon again.

I. COR. XIII:13. *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*

FOR excellence of style, and terseness of expression, few chapters in the Bible excel this thirteenth of First Corinthians. Although remarkable for its plainness and simplicity, yet each paragraph deserves study for the sake of a correct apprehension of the whole. But to confine our attention to the text, most unfortunately, the word *charity* is employed to render the Greek term *agape*. In the time of the translators this may have been justifiable, since the word might have meant in common usage, the grace of love, as it does not now. Tyndale 1525-6 translated *love*, and was followed by Cranmer 1539 and by the Geneva Bible 1557. The Bishop's Bible 1568 rendered *charity*, and was followed by the Authorized version 1611.

The word *agape* according to Robinson's Greek *Lex. of N. T.*, is not found in Greek writers. In the New Testament, with but one exception, the word is used to express God's love to Christ, and to man; also the love of believers to God, as a duty. "Hence love in general, holy love, without a definite object," as in our text. New Testament Greek is happy in possessing a single term expressive of this love existing between man and his God. The English language is poor in not having a word to correspond with this. In common usage our word *love* carries with it a sensuous element; and yet in the *language of Canaan* it is sanctified and so elevated to a spiritual use that

it means a holy principle of the heart, an abiding Christian grace. With this change of the word *charity* for that of *love*, our text is relieved, and the whole chapter as well. And in this, the Revised version comes to the help of the English reader, by returning to Tyndale and rendering the Greek term *love* in the sense above indicated.

Again to understand the teaching of the text, we must inquire the meaning of the words *and now*. Some think that the Apostle meant by the word *now* the present age, and that he is to be understood as saying, that the graces, *faith*, *hope* and *love* would abide so long as time should last, in contrast to the gifts spoken of above, which having served their purpose should cease. Also by the phrase *the greatest of these is love*, the Apostle is to be understood, also, as teaching that the graces of *faith* and *hope*, having fulfilled their offices in the work of salvation, should cease, and that the grace of love *only* would continue. This is the popular but a wrong understanding of the text. Accordingly faith is to be “swallowed up in sight,” and hope is to end in “glad fruition.” This misinterpretation has become the more popular by such hymnal teaching as;

“Hope shall change to glad fruition,—  
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise.”  
—Montgomery.

Again:

“When faith is sweetly lost in sight,  
And hope in full supreme delight,  
And everlasting love.”  
—Charles Wesley.

Isaac Watts in praising the grace of love, sings;

“ This is the grace that lives and sings,  
When faith and hope shall cease;  
'Tis this shall strike our joyful strings,  
In the sweet realms of bliss.”

But all this is most contrary to the teaching of the Apostle, since he distinctly declares that these three shall abide. Then, the words *and now* are to be understood not as referring to the present age, but simply as connecting what has gone before with what is to follow. *And now*, he says, these three graces are to abide; and immediately adds: *the greatest of these is love.* He certainly attributes here a certain superiority to the grace of love, but not by reason of its possessing an essential element of continuance beyond that of the other two. For, they are all mutually dependent. Faith works by love, therefore where no love is there can be no faith. Love is grounded on faith, so where there is no foundation, there can be no superstructure; in other words, where there is no confidence there can be no love. So likewise, where the light of hope is not, there can be neither faith nor love. By assigning priority to love, no violence is done to the other two graces. Mutually dependent, they are mutually efficient. In whatever sense the grace of love exceeds the others, such excess but adds to the glory of them all. Something of the superexcellence of this one grace is seen in that faith and hope pertain to ourselves, while love goes out for others. It may seem hard to give up this long cherished understanding of this text enforced as it has

been by the teachings of such sacred hymns as the above; but the Apostle's meaning is plain, and our judgment must approve the logical inference that these graces are essential to the well being of the soul whether in this world or that which is to come.

HEBREWS IV:8. *For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.*

9. *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*

WHILE the conclusion of the Apostle in this chapter in regard to a Sabbath rest, may be readily understood, yet to follow the argument step by step, is more or less difficult. He who understands the word *Jesus*, in verse 8, in its ordinary meaning, will be led entirely astray. The correct word "*Joshua*" is placed in the margin, but it ought to have found a place in the text and thus would have avoided confusion. Though familiar with the fact, that *Jesus* is the Greek form of the Hebrew word *Joshua*, yet in ordinary reading, no one thinks that the "son of Nun" is here intended. Of course our translators knew, but why they should have placed the word *Jesus* in the text and thus introduced serious ambiguity, is difficult to determine. There is a similar occasion of obscurity in Acts vii:45.

The earlier English versions have, *Josue*, i. e. *Joshua* but our version, as in the text, followed the Rheims which has, *Jesus*. The Syriac Peshito ver-

sion, Murdock's *translation*, reads; *Joshua, the son of Nun.* The Revised version translates; *For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken afterward of another day. There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God.*

The correct interpretation then seems to be; If Joshua had given the Israelites all the rest that was implied in the words *my rest*; God would not *afterward i. e.* in the time of David, have spoken of another day, and said; *Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* By which we understand, if the promise had not been open to the people, in the days of David, then God would not have warned them against the disobedience of their fathers; and the consequent danger of coming short of His promised rest. This rest then, was promised to the people in the time of Joshua, also in the time of David; so the Apostle could say as in the next verse, to the people of his own time, and through them, to the true Israel of all ages; *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*

It is somewhat remarkable that the Greek word in this ninth verse is changed from *katepausen* which means *rest*, to *sabbatismos* which means a *keeping of Sabbath*. This latter term, Robinson in his *Greek Lex.* says; "is used in the N. T., only of our eternal rest with God." Bengal after calling attention to this change in the Greek, remarks: "In time there are many sabbaths; but then there will be the enjoyment of rest, one, perfect, eternal. The

verbal noun is emphatic." Alford translates these verses; *For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he (God) not afterward speak of another day. There is yet reserved therefore a keeping of sabbath for the people of God.* In his comments, he says: "The term (*keeping of sabbath*) is used here to correspond to '*my rest*,' specified and explained in verse four. God's rest was a *keeping of sabbath*: so also will ours be."

While the whole chapter deserves special study, yet as intimated, the conclusion of the Apostle is easily reached. The interpretation as given above harmonizes with the Apostles' exhortation in verse 11, which reads in the Revised version 1881; *Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience.*

HEBREWS x:23. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)*

UNLESS familiar with the Greek, no one would ever suspect that there was anything out of the way in the translation of this passage. In its every word it seems in harmony with the context, and yet the original reads; *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope.* The introduction of the word *faith* in this text, can hardly be called a mistranslation, but must be looked upon as a serious oversight, a grievous mistake. This will appear by turning to several Greek texts of the New Testament, where invariably

the word is *hope*, not *faith*. According to Bagster's *English Hexapla*, all the other *English* versions except the Authorized, read; *hope* instead of *faith*. The case is so remarkable that the Editor observes in his *preface*, p. 58; "In this passage our authorised version has *faith* where the other five translations have *hope*: the original shows at once that *hope* is the right word. It is quite inexplicable how the word *faith* was introduced into this passage: it changes the whole exhortation." Besides the versions given in the *Hexapla*, the Bishop's Bible 1568 which was the basis of the Authorized version, reads correctly; *Lette us holde the profession of the hope, without wauering, (for he is faithful that promised.)*

While as intimated above, the word *faith* so harmonizes with the context, that it awakens no suspicion of wrong, yet as the editor of the *Hexapla* remarks; "It changes the whole meaning of the exhortation." So Alford, "The word 'faith,' given here by the A. V., instead of *hope*—breaking up the beautiful triad of vv. 22, 23, 24.—*faith, hope, love*, was a *mere mistake*, *hope* being the original, without any variety of reading." The Revised version 1881 translates; *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised.*

HEBREWS XII: 2. *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.* . . . . . . . . . .

THE Greek term *archegon* is variously rendered

by the translators of the Authorized version. In our text it is translated *author* while the alternative rendering “*beginner*” is placed in the margin. For the sake of the connection the latter is preferable. In Heb. ii: 10, the same word is translated *captain*, where the word *author* would have been more in harmony with the context. The Revised version so renders it. Bengel translates the word in our text *chief*, and remarks; “By this title Jesus is distinguished from all those enumerated in ch. xi. He himself is the only example, the only rule and standard of faith.” Meyer translates, *Beginner* and says; “Not only the example of the O. T. witnesses for the faith, but also the example of the Beginner and Perfecter of the faith, Christ Himself must animate us.” Alford prefers to translate, *author* and finds in it a greater depth of meaning and explains; “His going before us in faith has made faith possible for us: His perfecting faith in his own person and example has made faith effectual for us.” This is true, but is it the truth demanded by this connection? So far as Jesus is represented as the author of faith and consequently of salvation, we may worship Him, but not imitate His example. As the *beginner*, however, and the *perfecter* of faith in His own person, he becomes our leader and chief, and we may look to Him and be encouraged by His example. So the next verse exhorts; *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

Certainly the rendering of the whole phrase, *the*

*author and finisher of our faith*, as in the text, is objectionable. It limits the meaning to the faith of the believer, and thus detracts from the sense of the passage in its connection. Says Barnes; “The expression then, does not mean properly that he produces faith in us . . . but that he stands at the head as the most eminent example . . . on the subject of faith.” Even Alford who prefers the rendering *author* fearing lest this little word “our” in connection with *author*, should carry the thought too far, adds; “The ascription of faith to our Lord is so plain in our Epistle, ch. ii. 13; iii. 2, that we must not seem to exclude this sense in our rendering which we certainly do by *our faith*.”

Unfortunately the Revised version of 1881 translates the phrase; *the author and perfecter of our faith*. By such rendering the obscurity of the passage is continued, and the encouragement from so gracious a motive as the example of Jesus is almost wholly lost. But leave out the “our,” and substitute “beginner,” for *author*, and the text is brought into harmony with the context, and the motive reclaimed. Many Christians complain of a lack of faith, with no remedy at hand. They seem not to know that there is an eleventh chapter of Hebrews. And while the contents of this twelfth chapter is partially remembered as being very precious, yet evidently they have never quite understood that Jesus was set before them in our text as a perfect example of faith, lest they should become weary and faint in their minds.

I JOHN III:2. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

THE correct understanding of this verse depends upon whether the word *he* or *it* shall be supplied to the verb *shall appear*. Our Authorized version follows the Genevan Bible 1557 and supplies, *he*. The Revised version 1881 reads, *he* and places the word “*it*” in the margin. Tyndale 1525-6, 1534 without hesitation translates; *when it shall appere*. He is followed by Cranmer’s Bible 1539. Alford supplies *it*, and reads; *and it never yet was manifested what we shall be*. Bengel and Lange supply *it*. The weight of modern authority favors the word *it*.

As a rule those who translate; *When he shall appear*, understand the word *he* to refer to Christ. (See Bloomfield, Scott and Barnes.) On the other hand, those who translate; *when it shall appear*, understand the word *it* to refer to *what we shall be*, and think the supplying of the word *it* most needful, to bring out the meaning of the verse, and to carry out the thought of the passage. In its connection therefore, the sense of this second verse is; Through the Father’s love we are now His children. What the future of this childship shall be, hath not yet been made manifest. But when it shall be made manifest; when the *what is now*, shall be swallowed up in the *what shall be*, then, the children of God in their resurrection bodies, shall become like the Father, and shall see Him as He is. This unspeakable realiza-

tion, until realized, becomes an object of hope. So the very next verse says; *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

The words, *when it shall be manifested* are paraphrased in Lange, Schaff's edition; "When the mystery of our future being is unveiled, this is what shall be disclosed: *we shall be like Him*, whatever of glory and blessedness that involves." Alford in expounding the words, *we shall see Him as He is*, says; "So that the full and perfect accomplishment of this knowledge in the actual fruition of God Himself must of necessity bring with it likeness to God."

Meyer in commenting on this same phrase remarks; "The certain hope of the Christian is that he shall see God. In that hope there lies for him the certainty that he will one day be like God; for God can only be seen by him who is like Him."

REV. x:6. *And sware by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:*

7. *But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.*

By many the Apocalypse is regarded as a sealed book. But instead, it is a book of broken seals, of unstopped vials, or rather, open bowls, and of myste-

ries revealed. In the first chapter a blessing is promised to those who hear this prophecy and keep the things written therein. This blessing is attained and attainable by the unlearned as well as the learned. In some respects ordinary readers have the advantage, in that they accept the truths revealed without any preconceived theories of interpretation. In the visions of the seer, our horizon is extended. Through the clouds and storms of earth's conflicts as portrayed in these visions, we may all see the blue sky beyond. True in this book of the New Testament, as well as in the Prophetic books of the Old Testament, there are things hard to be understood; yet its lessons of prophecy and promise are for the encouragement of believers in all ages of the world.

But our attention is especially called here to the mistranslation of the last clause of verse 6. Words are real, and they convey definite ideas in accordance with their accepted meanings. When therefore we read the solemn declaration *that there should be time no longer*, we understand the phrase to mean, the end of time and the beginning of eternity. But that the words are ambiguous and misleading because mistranslated, we have abundant testimony. Alford translates; *that there shall be delay no longer*. In his comments he says; "Time shall no longer intervene: the appointed delay is at an end." As a matter of interpretation, the American editor of Lange virtually agrees with Alford, "that the *chronos* is that of chap. vi:11." In this same connection he remarks;

"The season referred to, manifestly, was that of world domination—to be followed by the avenging of the martyrs." Elliott in his *Horæ Apocalypticæ* remarks; "The Authorized version of it (that is, this clause), is one clearly inadmissible." His translation is; *There shall be time no longer extended*; that is, as he explains; "to the mysterious dispensation of God which has so far permitted the reign of evil . . . the seventh trumpet's æra being its fixt determined limit." Hengstenberg says; "Time, here, is as much as delay. The more exact import is given in ver. 7. From that we learn that a delay is meant." Other authorities might be cited, but these will suffice.

It is noticeable that while there is a difference in the critical and so far supposed exact wording of these several translations, yet the interpreters agree substantially as to the meaning of the word *time* in this connection; that "it is not used in its abstract sense as opposed to eternity." Like other texts this is dependent upon its connection for the right understanding of its meaning. It must be, therefore, that the clause does not mean that time shall end and eternity begin, since the succeeding verse, which is really a continuance of the sentence, distinctly says, as rendered by the Revised version; *but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets.* The mysterious dispensation, concerning which martyrs cried, *How*

long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? shall cease according to the proclamation of the angel, *that there should be delay no longer.* When, therefore, the seventh angel shall sound, then the prayers of the martyrs shall be answered, and God will accomplish His purposes of mercy towards His persecuted and patient Church. Says Meyer *in loco*; “The contextual determination of this idea . . . lies partly in the fact that its actual fulfilment is placed in the time of the seventh, and consequently the last, trumpet; partly in that its revelation is conceived of by the prophets as a *euaggeli-zein*, i. e., a communication of a joyful message.”



## Part II.

### Misinterpretations.

“ He is the best reader (of the Bible) who rather expects to obtain sense from the words, than impose it upon them, and who carries more away than he has brought, nor forces that upon the words which he had resolved to understand before he began to read.”—HILARY in his book *De Trinitate*.

## Part II.

### Familiar Bible Texts

Misused on account of being Misinterpreted.

**GENESIS IX:6.** *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*

MANY are misled in their interpretation of this verse by failing to consider the last clause, which reads; *for in the image of God made he man.* This clause lifts the command to a higher plane than that of human authority. The murderous assault against the image of God in man becomes an offense so rank, that in the judgment of Jehovah nothing short of the life of the offender will suffice. Herein is a divine ordinance with an extraordinary reason given for its enactment and enforcement. Guilt proved, God fixes the penalty. The magistrate is clothed with authority to pronounce the sentence, and to order its execution, whether he approves or disapproves. Legislatures may ignore this divine standard, and enact laws apparently more humane, but they do so in the face of this higher law; and consequently in despite the authority of God. Says Calvin; "Men are indeed unworthy of God's care, if respect be had only to themselves; but since they

bear the image of God engraven on them, He deems Himself violated in their person." If the reason here given for the enforcement of this command were better understood, a higher estimate would be put upon human life, and murderous assaults would be less frequent.

But further, this divine ordinance finds its counterpart in the innate moral nature of man. Where there are no legal enactments, this unwritten law speaks with authority, and demands the forfeited life of the murderer. Society once organized, surrenders this right into the hands of the magistrate, but demands its fulfilment. By such demand, society protests its innocence, and washes its hands from guilt. Says Prof. Tayler Lewis, in Lange's *Commentary*; "In no other way can the community itself escape the awful responsibility. Blood rests upon it. Impunity makes the whole land guilty." Nothing short of the execution of the penalty will satisfy this innate demand. Society not only thus frees itself from the taint of guilt, but also protects itself from further crimes. The law therefore is safe, satisfactory, and good. It stands for the honor of God and for the safety of man.

Not a few by failing to consider the second clause of this verse, and by allowing their feelings to control, are ready to dismiss this command by declaring it to be simply a Jewish precept, thus doing away with its universality. But the passage itself in the time and place of its utterance, easily refutes any such

view. Given to Noah and through him to his posterity, this ordinance bears upon its face divine authority and universal intention. Says Blackstone; "Capital punishment is inflicted by the immediate command of God himself to all mankind as in the case of murder, by the precept delivered to Noah, their common ancestor and representative, 'whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed.' "

For the sake of doing away with the authority of this passage as a command, there are those who think to interpret it simply as a prediction. This, however, can be done only by assuming that the prediction is based upon the will of God. But such assumption is fatal to the claim, since, instead of doing away with the command it establishes it.

Speaking of the prejudice of modern humanitarianism against the death penalty on account of its abuse, Lange says; "Yet still, a divine ordinance may not be set aside by our prejudices. It needs only to be rightly understood according to its own limitation and idea. The fundamental principle for all time is this, that the murderer, through his own act and deed, has forfeited his right in human society, and incurred the doom of death."

PSALM XXXII:8. *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*

IN this single text we have an illustration of both a

mistranslation and a misinterpretation. Dr. Alexander translates the second clause; *I will counsel thee, my eye (shall be) upon thee.* The Revised version reads; *I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee.* By these renderings the meaning is readily understood, which can hardly be said of the reading in our text. The obscurity involved in the words, *I will guide thee with mine eye,* seems to grow more obscure in our attempt to explain it away.

But a serious misinterpretation of this whole passage, arises from the custom of almost all English readers of attributing to God these words which doubtless ought to be ascribed to David. Dr. Alexander in commenting on this passage, says it is a "gratuitous assumption," that there should be "two different speakers in the two successive verses, without anything to indicate a change." Further he adds; "it is altogether probable that David is here speaking in his own person and fulfilling the vow recorded in another place, that when forgiven and restored to communion with God, he would teach transgressors his ways. See Ps. li:13. He may therefore be considered as addressing another like himself—to wit, a godly person—overtaken in transgression or exposed to strong temptation—and offering to point out to him the path of safety." With this understanding, the interpretation of the second clause seems easier in that it carries with it the additional idea of personal watchfulness.

It is noticeable that through this misinterpretation,

our passage is treasured up by many Christians as a precious promise of God's special guidance. We may confess to a sense of deprivation in being forced to give up the passage; and yet no amount of feeling based upon a false interpretation can justify our holding on to it. Then, in this seeming loss, there may be a possible gain. The wholesome truth of God's continual guidance, abounds in prophecy and promise throughout the Bible. Ps. lxxiii:24, reads; *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel.* See also Ps. xxv: 9., xlvi: 14, Is. lvii: 11, John xvi: 13. But this truth of Christian watchfulness, the importance of which cannot be overestimated, is not so common at least in the Old Testament. Calvin *in loco*, magnifies the importance of the teaching of this verse, when he says; "We may also learn from this place, that we are reconciled to God upon condition that every man endeavour to make his brethren partakers of the same benefit. David, the more strongly to mark his care about them, describes it by *the sight of the eye.* By the way it should be observed, that those who are solicitous about our welfare are appointed by the Lord as guides of our way."

David in his gratitude for forgiveness, promises under God not only to instruct but by personal sympathy and watchfulness to guide a penitent brother. If this be the correct interpretation, then we do not honor God by ascribing to Him the words of David. Besides to insist in so doing upon what is at least a doubtful interpretation, secures only a doubtful prom-

ise. But God's promises are yea and amen. If therefore we are called to give up this seemingly precious promise, as a matter of private feeling, much more so, ought we, in all honesty, to give it up in our public teaching. Especially ought all leaders of young people's meetings to hesitate before announcing the very popular hymn, which is founded on the misinterpretation of this passage, the first stanza of which reads;

" Precious promise God hath given  
To the weary passer-by,  
On the way from earth to heaven,  
'I will guide thee with mine eye.' "

PSALM CXXVII:2. *It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*

THE trouble in this passage is with the word *sleep*, the last word of the last clause. It is commonly understood to be used here in the figurative sense of death. A sense which is justified in the Scriptures. We have a beautiful example in the words of Jesus when He said; *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; . . . Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.* Bengel, beautifully, remarks on these words; "Death is the sleep of the pious in the language of heaven." This usage, however is highly figurative, and quite uncommon. Almost always the word *sleep* is used in the Scriptures in its plain sense.

A most important rule in interpretation is, that, the meaning of a word is determined by its connection. In this whole Psalm, there is no reference whatever to death. All is life and activity. The burden of the Psalm is the vanity of life struggles in building the house, in guarding the city, in rising up early, in sitting up late, excepting where the providence of God is cheerfully recognized. The merely worldly man, in his anxiety for success in life, may cheat himself of required rest in sleep, and whether for the time he is successful or not, he is without God's support and promise. But the Christian in his daily struggles, has the blessed assurance, for *so he giveth his beloved sleep.*

It is almost incomprehensible how this false interpretation could become so general in the minds and hearts of intelligent Christians, when the text and context are so pronounced in fixing the right meaning of the word.

Some years ago, an aged minister, and lifelong friend, called to obtain the exact wording of this clause from the Latin Vulgate. He wished to place it as an inscription on the tombstone of his daughter. I had no heart to tell him that the inscription would be inappropriate; and in the sense that he intended, a misuse of the text.

A daily paper, recently, in giving an account of the services at a funeral, stated; that "A solo was sung entitled, 'He giveth his beloved sleep.'" There is an anthem lying before me, with the same title, and

possibly by the same author, the last stanza of which reads;

“In childhood’s winsome page,  
In manhood’s joyous bloom;  
In feebleness and age,  
In death’s dark gathering gloom:  
God doth His own in safety keep,  
‘He giveth His beloved sleep.’ ”

Evidently song writers, and song singers, as well as others, need to guard against the misuse of familiar Bible texts.

Ecc. xi:3. *If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.*

If the commonly accepted interpretation of the latter clause of this verse is applicable and forceful, it may be asked; “Why seek for another explanation?” In the figurative language of the Scriptures, trees represent men. Is it not natural then that the fall of a tree should symbolize the death of a man? and the fixedness of the place should indicate that physical death does not change moral character? These questions are natural and are in line with the views of the old commentators. Matthew Henry, almost two hundred years ago wrote: “This (*i. e.*, the falling of the tree), is commonly applied to death; therefore let us do good, . . . because death will shortly come, and cut us down, and we shall then be

determined to an unchangeable state." In Scott's *Commentary*, we read; "And as the tree continues where it fell; so will men abide in that state in which death leaves them."

The above truth is eminently Scriptural; but from the context it is not the teaching intended here. There are some six verses of the chapter which are closely connected, and form one paragraph. The first verse introduces the dominant thought, and it reads; *Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.* The purpose of the Preacher in this and the following verses seems to be to encourage acts of beneficence. Practically, in dispensing charitable gifts, there is an element of uncertainty. This is recognized in the first clause of the first verse. But that it is largely a seeming uncertainty, the Preacher adds, *for thou shalt find it after many days.* Find what? Surely not the bread, for this was given without expectation of return; but rather the evidence of good that it would accomplish. In the next verse, the Preacher exhorts, notwithstanding this uncertainty, to give liberally. Don't stop with seven but give a portion *also to eight.* In the next verse, which is our text, the Preacher would have us learn a lesson from the rain. Before the little drops leave the clouds, there is uncertainty as to any good they may accomplish. They may fall upon rocky places, or be swallowed up in lakes or rivers; yet it is these drops that enrich and make green the earth. So it is in the falling of the tree. The trunk

becomes dry and hard. After many days it decays and becomes worthless, yet in its worthlessness, it enriches the ground upon which it falls. The interpretation is easy. Our gifts like the fallen tree may seem worthless, whether they fall to the southward or the northward, on good or poor ground, yet they so enrich the hearts of those who receive them that flowers of joy and gratitude spring up.

The next and fourth verse keeps up the dominant thought and indicates the important lesson, that he who allows himself to be influenced by this seeming uncertainty, by observing the wind and the clouds, will neither sow nor reap. Hence in the sixth and last verse of the paragraph, the exhortation is; sow in the morning, and withhold not thy hand in the evening, for thou knowest not which shall prosper.

This passage has been variously interpreted. Lange apparently approaches nearest to the meaning, by agreeing with those who explain the text in its connection; that it matters not upon whose ground the tree falls, "if it does not profit the one, it does the other. And it is just so with the gifts of love; their fruit is not lost." It is sufficient to note that Moses Stuart in common at least with one critic before him, finds in this passage a warning against inevitable evils, instead of encouragement of future good. It is hardly necessary to state that in view of the plain teaching of these several verses, in their connection with the first verse, that such explanation is unsatisfactory. And yet Professor Stuart's

exposition is eminently critical and worthy of consideration.

*ISAIAH XXI:11. The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?*

*12. The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come.*

WE have in these verses a remarkable instance in which a celebrated hymn, noted for its excellence and wide popularity, fixes upon this prophecy, a false interpretation. The first stanza reads;

“Watchman! tell us of the night,  
What its signs of promise are?  
Traveler! o'er yon moutain height!  
See that glory-beaming star:  
Watchman! does its beauteous ray  
Aught of hope or joy foretell?  
Traveler! yes; — it brings the day, —  
Promised day of Israel.”

This hymn is Messianic, glowing with the “blessedness and light” of Old Testament promise and New Testament fulfilment. All of which is foreign to a correct exposition of this prophecy. Again our passage is a favorite basis for missionary sermons, which are inspired and made to glow with Gospel light which “bursts o'er all the earth.” Then again these verses by a false accommodation are made to stand at the head of sermons on the “Signs of the Times,” in which the spirit of the hymn is followed rather than the exegesis of the passage.

There is a commonly accepted explanation of this prophecy based in part upon the historical facts connected with it, which is as follows; The Edomites who were the descendants of Esau and so related to the Israelites, yet they were their most inveterate enemies. The indignation of the Jews against the Edomites is expressed in Ps. cxxxvii: 7, *Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.* Edom was in deep darkness, but her condition at this time was preferable to that of Jerusalem as she was desolate, her people being in captivity. Hence the Edomite in the spirit of pride is supposed to taunt the prophet with the inquiry, *What of the night?* The prophet takes no notice of the taunt, but truthfully answers, first in respect to the Israelites in their captivity; *The morning cometh.* Then in respect to the Edomites, he adds; *And also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come.* While to the prophetic vision of Isaiah, Edom is encompassed in darkness yet there is hope if she will repent.

Probably a more correct interpretation of this short and somewhat difficult prophecy is, to regard the cry out of Edom as an honest cry; also to confine the answers, to the future of the Edomites. Anxious for the morning, out of the depths comes the cry, *Watchman, what of the night?* From his watch tower, the prophet turns his eye towards the east. He sees a ray of light, but suddenly it is ob-

scured by the darkness. Hence his answer; *The morning cometh and also the night.* And so the history of ill-fated Edom proved. Says Delitzsch; “Again and again there was a glimmer of morning for Edom (and what a glimmer in the Herodian age!) but it was swallowed up directly by another night, until Edom became an utter Dumah and disappeared from the history of nations.” While in the vision there was little or no encouragement for Edom, yet the watchman in the spirit of a true prophet, adds; *If ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come.* That is, if you are in earnest in seeking an answer from Jehovah, and will repent, come to me again. But they failed to return as their future history shows. This prophecy is not without its difficulties but this latter explanation seems preferable on account of its simplicity.

ISAIAH LXIII:1. *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.*

AN intellegent Bible reader once said in my hearing; “The language of this prophecy is very beautiful, I like to read it.” Upon inquiry I found that this same reader, like thousands of others, by a false interpretation, made the prophecy to mean the very opposite from what was intended. The common interpretation is, that it refers to Christ in His sacrificial

work of redemption. The familiar phrases of the prophecy, so often quoted, such as; *Mighty to save*, last clause of the text; *I have trodden the wine-press alone*, first clause of verse 3; *Therefore mine own arm brought salvation*, third clause of verse 5; these all seem so befitting and appropriate, that it is quite natural to ascribe them to Christ in His work of redemption. This is doubtless true if these phrases are taken separately. But not so if the chapter is read carefully, and the phrases interpreted by their immediate connection. For whosoever *this is that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah*; he comes to execute a work of wrath, instead of mercy; his garments are sprinkled with blood, but it is the blood of his enemies, not his own. It was *their blood* that made red *his* garments. His *own arm brought salvation*, but it was the arm of the conqueror stretched out in *fury*. *I will bring down their strength to the earth*. He is *mighty to save*, that is, by his power and purpose to destroy his enemies.

The vision was very striking, the language dramatic, combined they must have appealed to the imagination, as well as the judgment, of the Israelites. The Edomites were deadly enemies of the chosen people of God. They not only warred against Israel but incited other nations to do the same. Because of this, the intent of the vision is to foreshadow the final overthrow of the Edomites; and above all to teach the people that Jehovah must be recognized as their Deliverer. At the time of this prophecy, the

Edomites were a flourishing people. Yet the vision by way of encouragement, represents Edom as already destroyed. If the above be correct, then the vision pictures forth none other than Jehovah, as the person coming from Edom *travelling in the greatness of his strength.*

Even in Calvin's time, this passage was sadly misinterpreted. He says; "This chapter has been violently distorted by Christians, as if what is said here related to Christ, whereas the prophet speaks simply of God himself." Delitzsch in substance says; The person approaching speaks in righteousness, this alone might lead us to surmise that it is God that speaks. Again he adds in this connection, that the Seer was at first in doubt, but at last, by the answers he received, the enigma was explained. "This heroic figure was Jehovah Himself."

The vision thus understood is plain, and was adapted to the wants of the Israelites at the time. And while the prophecy cannot without violence be made to refer to Christ, who in His humility came to suffer and to save; yet it may be read and pondered with profit by Christians of to-day. There are those who in their bitterness cry out against the Christian Church as did the Edomites against Jerusalem, saying; *Rase it, rase it.* The people of God therefore need the encouragement of this vision, that the strong arm of Jehovah is still stretched out for their defense. They need to heed the lesson also that Jehovah must be recognized as the Deliverer of His

people, not only in the old, but also in the new dispensation. The counterpart of this passage of Isaiah, is found in Rev. xix. "The vision of John" says Delitzsch, "is evidently formed upon the basis of that of Isaiah; for when it is said of the Logos that He rules the nations with a staff of iron, this points to Ps. ii; and when it is still further said that He treads the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God, this points back to Is. lxiii." The Christ therefore of the New Testament may be read into our chapter not as the suffering Savior but as the triumphant Redeemer.

MATTHEW v: 39. *But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

MANY understand this precept by too literal an interpretation. They mistake the husk for the kernel, the letter for the spirit. To all such this teaching is impracticable, because its requirements seem outside of the range of common sense and every day life. Literal obedience in their judgment would be taken as an evidence of weakness and cowardice. By such understanding the precept is robbed of its meaning and moral power. But in this as well as in all His sayings, Christ would make men courageous, and victorious over evil. He did not intend to abrogate the law of self-defense. There are times when physical defense is a necessity. Physical courage is a plant of God's own planting, and is good. There is no conflict however, here, when we say that courage based

upon moral principle and self-discipline is better. Experience and observation teach that it requires more manly courage to triumph by moral, than by physical force.

In cultivating the mind and the conscience, there results a keen sense of justice. But the keener the sense, the greater the demand for self-discipline, and self-control. The strength or weakness of a man's character is rightly estimated by this standard. To overcome by yielding, though paradoxical, is possible. It is therefore by an inward spiritual state and not by an outward physical act that this precept is to be fulfilled. Then there is a possible possession of the grace of charity that insures against being easily provoked.

It must be that we understand the character of the Apostle Paul better from the untoward incident which occurred in the court of the high priest. Paul was making his defense before the council when the high priest commanded them, that stood by, to smite him on the mouth. Do you wonder that this man so richly endowed by nature and by grace also, should have cried out, in almost a prophetic spirit; *God shall smite thee thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?* And yet when reproved Paul rises in spirit and humbly confesses his wrong. There is encouragement here for every Christian overtaken by cruel provocation, that though he fall he may like Paul, rise again. If this example is good,

there is another which is still better. It is recorded in John xviii: 22, 23. Jesus had been brought into the palace to answer before the high priest, who questioned him as to His disciples, also as to His teachings. He replied in words that will stand the test of wisdom and civility. Whereupon one of the officers that stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand saying; *Answerest thou the high priest so?* *Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?* In the midst of cruel provocation, the Christian is here furnished with a perfect example. For in this answer the claims of justice are asserted and innocence defended not by a threat but by a searching question, **WHY SMITEST THOU ME?**

“The spirit of the ethics of Jesus, His own example . . . and that of the apostles, . . . requires us to recognize in these manifestly typical representations, vv. 39–41, not precepts to be literally followed, but precepts which are certainly to be determined *according to their idea.* This idea, which is that of love, . . . is concretely represented in those examples, but has, in the relation of external life . . . the measure and the limitation of its moral practice.” (See *Remark*, Meyer’s *Commentary, in loco.*)

**MATTHEW v: 48.** *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

THE key to the right understanding of this verse,

is found in the preceding verses as far back as the 43rd. and especially the 44th. verse, which latter reads; *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, . . .*

. *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* The perfection therefore commanded in the text consists in likeness to God in His dealings with His enemies. The teaching is exalted, but not more than the teacher. The standard is high, but not higher than our calling as children of God. For by His grace we are children, and by the same grace we may be like Him in dealing with those who spitefully use us.

As a rule of life, then, this precept is perfect. It leads up to God. We may fail to-day, but such failure does not destroy our confidence in the standard, neither our purpose to strive to attain it. We may say as did the Apostle Paul; *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* In attainments made through such motives, self-righteousness is impossible. So intimate is the relation of this possible holiness of heart and life, that this precept cannot be fulfilled in the absence of one or the other. To love our neighbor aright, we must first love our God. Holiness and purity of heart are required by this precept. For in another place it is written; *Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

From such understanding of this passage, there is no room for the ancient doctrine of Christian perfection in this life. However unjust the charges of Semi-Pelagianism against Arminius, and however satisfactorily he may have refuted them; yet it cannot be denied that there lurks somewhere in the workings of his system a tendency to this doctrine. Here and there among his followers even unto this day, there are those who, becoming dissatisfied with their slow spiritual progress, insist upon emphasizing out of all proportion, the human side of the work of salvation. They say; God commands perfection, the command implies ability to attain it; such attainment is holiness; such holiness is sanctification; and such sanctification is sinlessness.

Said a young Christian, while yet a student in college, full of zeal because of the inherent uplifting power of the human will, and carried away by this newly discovered tenet of perfection; "God does not command impossibilities. If he commands perfection then the thing commanded is attainable."

To a certain class of minds, there is something infatuating in this, to them a new and progressive religious thought. Hence they look with compassion on those who refuse to accept their new light. Said one of these sanctified and self-satisfied ones in a personal conversation; "Really it requires an effort to keep sweet when so many professing Christians are satisfied to live in an unsanctified state." A minister not long since told me, in regard to one of the churches

to which he was ministering; "So many of the members have been carried away by this doctrine of perfectionism, I fear that my work among them is at an end. I find no place for preaching the doctrines of sin, confession, repentance, and divine grace." The good minister was right. Those of his flock thus minded were beyond, in theory at least, the necessity of the fundamental teachings of the gospel. Far better to be possessed of the humble spirit of the publican, for the sake of real Christian progress, who in his humility cried out; *God be merciful to me a sinner.*

Interpret, therefore, this passage in its connection. It points the way by which we may become the children of our Father which is in heaven. Strive therefore to be perfect in loving your enemies. Says Barnes *in loco*; "This is a law of Christianity, original and peculiar. No system but this has required it, and no act of Christian piety is more difficult. None shows more the power of the grace of God . . . and none furnishes better evidence of piety."

MATTHEW VI: 34. *Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

Serious objections have been brought against this text as being dangerous and immoral, because it encourages improvidence and lack of forethought. From whatever source these cavillings may have aris-

en, they argue ignorance of the Greek term, which is here translated “*take no thought*,” also, of the fact that the word *thought* is here used in an obsolete sense. The original term as defined by Robinson’s *N. T. Lex.*, means, “*To take anxious thought*”. And this is the sense which was attached to the word when our translation was made. “‘Thought’ says Trench in his *Glossary of English Words*, ‘is constantly *anxious* care in our earlier English.’” The following are his illustrations.

He so plagued and vexed his father with injurious indignities, that the old man for very *thought* and grief of heart pined away and died. Holland, *Camden’s Ireland*, p. 120.

In five hundred years only two queens have died in childbirth. Queen Catherine Parr died rather of *thought*.

*Tracts during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth; Somer’s Tracts Vol. I*, p. 172.

Harris, an alderman of London, was put in trouble, and died of *thought* and anxiety before his business came to an end.

Bacon, *The History of King Henry VII.*

With this understanding of the word, the text is relieved from all ambiguity. It forbids over anxiety, but in no sense discourages prudent forethought. The Revised version 1881 recognizing that the word *thought* had lost its original meaning, translates; *Be not therefore anxious for the morrow; for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.* In this version the word *morrow* is personified. It *cares for itself*, not *for the things of itself*. The translation is evidently from a Greek text that omits the term *for the things of*. (Compare

Westcott and Hort's *Gr. Test.*) This is confirmed by the immediate context; *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.* Each day has its own burden of care. Besides it is always to-day. The ills of the impossible to-morrow are imaginary. Deal not in futures. Poor human nature has always needed this precept. It finds a place in other writings, especially in the Jewish Talmud. It is practical and common-sense. But in its present setting, it is also spiritual. From its connection, we learn that it is occasioned by distrust, which is remedied by faith, and by obedience to the words of the 33rd verse; *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

MATTHEW x: 10. *Nor scrip for your journey. neither two coats, neither shoes nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.*

OUR attention is called to a single word in this verse, and not to its teaching as a whole. Although it is conceded that the prohibition was temporary, since we read in Luke xxii: 36; *Then he said unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: . . .* In this the command is reversed because of change in their condition.

The question is as to the meaning of the word *scrip* in the first clause. Dr. Eadie in his elaborate and invaluable *History of the English Bible*, is responsible for the following; . . . "an intelligent

person was asked, ‘What scrip for your journey must mean?’ replied at once, ‘Oh, some kind of oriental promissory note.’” A few days ago I put the same question to an intelligent Bible reader, who replied; “I always thought it meant some kind of money.” Doubtless, because the word is modern in form, this is the answer that ninety-nine out of a hundred would return. But though modern in form, the word is archaic in meaning. In Scripture usage it means; a wallet, pouch or bag, for carrying food while on a journey. In I Sam. xvii: 40, we read; that David . . . chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd’s bag which he had, even in a scrip.” The Revised version 1881 gives the correct rendering of our text as follows: *No wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes nor staff: for the labourer is worthy of his food.*

MATTHEW XIII: 31. *Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.*

DR. Thomas Scott in his comments on this text, says; “Scarcely anything, in the whole Scripture, has given more discouragement to weak Christians than this passage, and a few others coincident with it.” In the same connection, he makes the startling remark; ‘Almost every humble and conscientious believer, at one time or other is tempted to think that he has

committed the unpardonable sin; and the interpretations which may have given, without properly adverting to the context have frequently tended to increase these apprehensions and difficulties.” The severe religious atmosphere which prevailed in Dr. Scott’s time was favorable to such misapprehension. Christians in our day, however, are less severe in their judgment against themselves. On this account, and for other reasons doubtless, this false apprehension is not now a prevailing form of temptation. Doubtless, however, there are some among us who have either come in contact with, or at least, have heard of, individuals, who were suffering from this sad delusion. While the spirit of the age has had much to do with the prevalence of this serious affliction, yet it must be traced chiefly to a gross misapprehension of the teaching of this passage.

By noting the connection, it will be found that these words of the Savior, are not addressed to humble believers. He was reproving the proud Pharisees. They blasphemously asserted that; *This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.* In reply, Jesus not only claimed that He cast out devils by the Spirit of God; but sustained the claim by a searching argument. Then by an easy transition, He comes to revelation, and with authority adds; *Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.* He thus solemnly warns the Phari-

sees, lest in their wicked boldness they should go a step too far and blaspheme the Holy Ghost; a sin for which there was no forgiveness. It is the Pharisee, and the wicked blasphemer in all ages of the world that are here addressed. By no possible interpretation therefore, can these words be applied to Christians.

Another source of misunderstanding of this text is a misconception as to the nature of this sin. A misconception arising from what Alford denominates; "The prejudice which possesses men's minds owing to the use of the words, 'the *sin* against the Holy Ghost.' It is not a particular species of sin which is herein condemned, but a definite act showing a *state* of sin, and that state a wilful determined opposition to the present power of the Holy Spirit; and this as shown by its fruit, *blasphemy*." Lange, *Am. Ed.*, says; "It is unscriptural to identify blasphemy against the Holy Spirit with sin against the Holy Spirit." All blasphemy is sin but all sin is not blasphemy. There are sins against the Holy Spirit that may be forgiven, such as resisting, grieving and quenching the Spirit; but maliciously attributing the power of the Holy Ghost to an evil spirit, is what here the Savior pronounces blasphemy. A sin which involves a determined purpose to detract from the divine majesty of the Holy Spirit. Such a sin can in no wise be charged to a Christian. Besides, rightly understood, the words of the Savior were not uttered as a judgment against, but as a warning to the Pharisees, and to the revilers of God in all ages, lest the danger

line should be passed and the unpardonable sin of blasphemy be committed.

If the above considerations be correct, then this dreaded sin is impossible to the Christian believer. He may be guilty of entertaining doubts and fears and thus become oppressed by spiritual darkness, but from all this he may be delivered since his sin is that of unbelief, a sin that is pardonable.

*LUKE XIII : 24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

THE above is an indirect though pertinent reply to the question of the preceding verse *Are there few that be saved?* The full answer includes the paragraph to the close of the verse 30. Instead of gratifying curiosity, our Lord exhorts his hearers; that if they would be among the number of the saved they must strive to enter in at the strait gate. And in the same sentence He solemnly warns them against being found amongst the many that seek, and are not able to enter because the door shall be shut. This question was a speculative one among the Jews, hence Jesus assures them, that whether the number of the saved be few or many, the limitations would not be in accordance with their thoughts. Claims of salvation resting on national privileges or home influences were deceitful and false. Many shall seek to enter in and not be able after the door is shut; but other many the number of whom no man can number, shall

come from the east, and west, from the north, and from the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. By the laws of this kingdom, all human calculations are reversed for, behold there are last, in point of privilege who shall be first, and there are first, in point of privilege, who shall be last.

This answer with its super-human wisdom, and its personal application comes home to Gentiles as well as Jews, who are deceiving themselves by false claims of personal religious privileges. The meaning of this reply, as a whole is easily understood; but the interpretation of the text itself depends upon the punctuation. The ordinary pointing is a full stop disconnecting the text with what follows. This is based upon a number of critical Greek texts. Those who espouse the correctness of this pointing, explain the verse as elliptical. Accordingly after the phrase, *enter in*, they supply in both instances, the words, “*into salvation or into the Kingdom of God*.” And they explain that the emphasis of the command is, “*to seek to enter in at the narrow door*, for many shall seek to enter (*elsewhere*) and shall not be able.” (So Alford, *in loco.*)

A much less common pointing of the verse is by a comma, instead of a period. Among early English versions, Wycliffe seems to be the only exception, all the others use a period. But he, by adopting the comma, connects our verse with verse 25, which gives the reason for not being able, which is, that the door would be shut. This punctuation is sanctioned

by important Greek texts of the New Testament, prominent among which is that of the late text of Westcott and Hort. Bloomfield adopts this pointing and explains in commenting on verse 25; "I have preferred the punctuation of the Bâle Editor, and approved by Bornemann, because it seems most agreeable to the context to connect this verse, (as the Syr. Transl. and Beza did) with the *preceding*, rather than the *following*." Mr. Barnes, in commenting upon the passage, remarks: "But a more probable meaning of this passage is that which refers this *seeking* to a time that shall be *too late*; to the time when the master has risen up."

If in pointing the period is retained, which is favored by Alford and other high authorities, then the first interpretation is correct. Yet very few hearers, or even readers, are able to supply the words required in order to complete the sense. The second explanation therefore, which bases itself upon the introduction of the comma, seems preferable since it meets all the demands of the connection, and renders the meaning plain and forceful. Besides it is supported by equally good authorities.

LUKE xviii: 12. *I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*

THE system of titheing belongs to the Old Testament economy. In many fundamentals the a, b, c, of Christianity is found in the Jewish religion. In Matt. xxiii: 23, Christ recognizes the use of the tithe,

but points out its abuse. The clause in our text, *I give tithes of all that I possess*, is doubtless a mis-translation. The Greek word for *I possess*, is better rendered by "I get" or "I acquire." Alford says; "Not all that *I possess*, which is an incorrect rendering, but of all that *I acquire*." Then like other passages, this suffers from misinterpretation by reason of being considered out of its connection. By remembering the simple statement, a vague impression arises that the passage, in some way, refers to Christian giving, or at least to the Jewish system of tithing. But nothing can be further from the truth. The clause in its connection is the language of a boaster. In claiming to fast twice in the week, and to give tithes of all that he gained, he loudly professes a self-imposed obedience beyond the requirements of the law. By referring to Lev. xxvii: 30, Num. xxviii: 21, and especially Deut. xiv: 22, 23, and 28, 29; it will be seen that a tenth was required for the priesthood; another tenth for the sanctuary; and still another tenth once in three years for the poor. Surely such demands were sufficiently exacting, yet our Pharisee proclaims a self-righteousness that exceeds them all.

Plainly such language can have no reference to a correct standard of Old Testament tithing; and if not to the Jewish, much less to the Christian standard of giving. True the New Testament law of beneficence is founded on that of the Old Testament. The fundamental objects are the same: namely, the support of the ministry, the support of the sanctuary, and the

support of the poor. Besides, the purpose is the same, which is the expression of religious gratitude. But under the Old economy, it was largely of the letter, and under the New, it is largely of the spirit. And yet under both it is a solemn religious service. The Apostle Paul in I Cor. xvi: 2, spells out from the letters of the Jewish law the fundamental principle of Christian beneficence. The principle is of universal application, *let each one of you lay by him in store.* It involves a fixed basis applicable to each one, *as he may prosper;* also a fixed time for the determination of the amount, *the first day of the week.* (See Revised version.) This Pauline principle if applied in its spirit would meet the needs of the individual conscience and the wants of an aggressive Christianity.

Our passage, therefore, has no bearing whatever upon either Jewish or Christian beneficence; but forms a part of one of the most striking word pictures of the Bible. By a single stroke of color it helps to delineate the proud nature of the Pharisee, in strong contrast with the humble spirit of the Publican.

LUKE xxi: 9. *But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.*

IT is remarkable to what an extent some words retain their form, and yet, in course of time, lose their original meaning. The phrase, *by and by*, of our text, which occurs frequently in the Scriptures is an example in which the form is retained, but the

change of meaning is complete. The sense now being the very opposite from what it was originally. By the words *by and by*, we understand the near future. At the time the Authorized version was made, however, this phraze meant immediately, at once. Trench in his *Glossary of English Words*, remarks; “The inveterate procrastination of men has put ‘by and by’ farther and farther off.” Take a single one of his examples;

When Demophantus fell to the ground, his Soldiers fled *by and by* (—) upon it.—North, *Plutarch's Lives*, p. 308.

When the daughter of Herodias, by the command of her mother, said; *I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist*, she did not mean that it should be done at the convenience of the king, some time in the near future; but rather at once, as prompted by the impatience of her mother. So the record of this infamous transaction reads, in the sixth chapter of Mark; *And immediately the king sent an executioner, . . . and he went and beheaded him in the prison, And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.*

Other examples might be cited, wherein the words *by and by*, lead to confusion by changing the meaning of the sentence to the very opposite for what was intended; but probably there is none so serious as that of our text. The Savior is addressing His disciples, who are anxious in regard to the fulfilment of His prophetic words respecting the destruction of

Jerusalem, and the end of the world. In this immediate connection, Jesus warns them against being led astray by false Christs, who if possible would deceive the very elect; neither must they be terrified by reason of wars and rumors of wars; *these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.* Understood as Jesus intended, these words silenced their fears. They were assured that though the crisis was approaching, yet the end would not be immediately. Bible readers unless their attention has been called to the radical change of meaning in the words *by and by*, must fail to interpret aright the teaching here set forth by the Savior, since as we understand the phrase, the sense is opposite from what was intended. The Revised version, here as in many other places, comes to the relief of the English reader, and translates the last clause of our text; *but the end is not immediately.*

ACTS XXI: 15. *And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.*

THIS text furnishes another example of a word modern in form but obsolete in sense. It is this familiarity of form that renders such words so mischievous. There is nothing in the word *carriages* to lend even a suspicion that it means anything unusual, but simply some sort of a cart or wagon. If this were really its meaning, then the question urged by an infidel against the truthfulness of the Book of Acts, as cited by Dr. Trench, (See *On the A. V. of*

- N. T. p. 28.) would have real force. The objector triumphantly asks; "How could they have taken up their carriages when there is no road for wheels, nothing but a mountain-track between Cæsarea and Jerusalem?" The weakness of this seemingly home thrust, lies in the fact that the word carriages meant at the time our Authorized version was made, not that which carries, but that which is carried. We read in Sam. xvii: 22, *And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.* The margin reads; "*the vessels from upon him.*" That is whatever David brought with him he left with the keeper of the baggage. Tyndale 1534 renders the phrase; *We made oure selfes redy.* Cranmer 1539 reads; *We toke up oure burthens.* The Genevan version has; *We trussed up our fardels, and went up to Hierusalem.*

It is a question with some, based upon a slight difference of the Greek word in earlier and later editions of the Greek Testament, whether the luggage from the ship was deposited in Cæsarea, or whether it was simply packed for the journey to Jerusalem. This latter seems the more likely, in that their baggage was made up in part at least, of the alms which they taking to Jerusalem. No great importance, however, attaches itself to this, except that every incident in Paul's journey is of interest, but here we are to confine our inquiry to the right understanding of the word *carriages*. It is really a matter of con-

gratulation, therefore, that we read in the Revised version, 1881; *After these days we took up our baggage and went up to Jerusalem.*

I COR. II: 9. *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of men, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

THIS familiar text by misinterpretation is sadly misused. It is understood as setting forth the unseen glories of the future world. And is so used in the pulpit, and on the floor of the prayer-meeting. Doubtless outside of its connection, the passage is an appropriate description of the possibilities implied in the things *which God hath prepared* and which He holds in reserve in heaven. Things which so far surpass the excellencies of earth, that the mind of man cannot even conceive of them.

All this is true but it is not the truth taught here. The connection shows that the Apostle is speaking of God's wisdom *in a mystery*, even the wisdom *hidden, yet ordained before the world unto our glory*, a wisdom not understood by the rulers of this world, but by the humble followers of God to whom it hath been revealed *by his Spirit*; to the end, *that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God*; that is, the things which underlie revealed religion; comprising Gospel benefits and blessings, all the spiritual realities involved in the wonderful riches of God's grace so freely offered in the Gospel, and so

easily discerned by the spiritual eye and ear of the believer. The truth of the text as thus explained is important and finds abundant place in the Scriptures, but this text, being so commonly misunderstood, is rarely ever cited as enforcing it.

According to Lange, God has prepared for His people who wait for Him things far exceeding all human experience and observation. Alford explains the phrase (as he translates it) *that we may know the things freely given to us by God*, as; “the treasures of wisdom and of felicity which are the free gifts of the gospel dispensation.” These *deep things of God*, in the tenth verse, Calvin says, must be understood as; “The entire doctrine of salvation, which would have been to no purpose set before us in the Scriptures, were it not that God elevates our minds to it by His Spirit.”

This text affords another example whereby a false interpretation, the tendency manifests itself to magnify the glories of heaven at the expense of spiritual blessings vouchsafed to believers while on earth. By such treatment not only is the text misused but the children of God suffer loss.

I COR. IV:4. *For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.*

INTERPRETED in any modern sense, the first clause of our verse is meaningless. The phrase *by myself* in ordinary speech means to be alone, to be

separated from others. But this cannot be the meaning of the phrase here. It is quite natural for the intelligent reader to attach some sort of meaning to the text and therefore may think to interpret the phrase, that without the help of others and especially without God's help Paul knew nothing. But such understanding is a gross misunderstanding of the passage.

The proposition, by, has a host of meanings such as; at, near, with, through, during, for, and still others that may suggest themselves, but none of them help to any intelligible interpretation here. The reason is that while the word is modern in form it is archaic in sense. When our translation was, made, in this connection, it meant simply against. Eadie in his *Hist. Eng. Bible* II. 374, says in respect to this phrase; "The idiom is old English, as in Webb's travels, 1590, 'they could find nothing by me:' Cranmer says to Henry VIII, 'I am exceeding sorry that such faults can be proved by the queen'" that is, against her."

Paul intended to say, that he regarded it a small thing to be judged by others. He did not even judge himself. For in the execution of his office as a minister of Christ, he knew nothing against himself.

Among the prominent English versions before 1611, the Rheims translation 1582 is the only one whose language is not now misleading. Tyndale 1534 translates this clause; *I knowe nought by myselfe*. He is followed by Cranmer, and by the Genevan

Bible. But the Rheims version reads; *For I am not guilty in conscience of anything.* While the use of the word *by*, is found in previous English versions and was in use at the time our translation was made, yet it could not have been very common since Deut. xxvii: 16, Ezek. xxii: 7, furnish the only other examples of its use in this sense, in the Authorized version. The former reads; *Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother.* And the latter; *In thee have they set light by father and mother.* The Revised version 1881 translates; *For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.* Rightly understood therefore, this was not an empty boast on the part of the Apostle, since he did not claim on this account to be justified before God. He simply meant that he was not conscious of any unfaithfulness in the discharge of his duties as a steward of the mysteries of God.

COL. II: 21. (*Touch not; taste not; handle not;*  
22. *Which all are to perish with the using.*)

FEW texts have been so woefully misunderstood and misapplied, as the above. Notwithstanding the exposition of commentators, and other sources of information, many Bible readers still accept of these words as a Bible argument against the social wine cup, or at least, as a Scripture warning against the slightest contact with intoxicating drinks. So wedded has this text become to the principle of total ab-

stinence that there are those who while they know that it has not the remotest reference to this subject, yet they say; "The warning is so applicable, why disturb the relation, why not allow it to be so used?" "The answer is simply because such misapplication of the teachings of the Scriptures is not justifiable. It must be, however, that the number of those who are willing thus to handle the words of the Bible, are very few. Doubtless the chief occasion of this gross abuse arises from failing to consider the text in its connection.

The whole chapter is taken up by the Apostle in warning the church at Colosse against being led away by the traditions of men. Paul's language here and in other places, shows that he met with serious opposition from Judaizing teachers, who sought to impose upon Hebrew Christians various ceremonial restrictions, from which through the Gospel they had been set free. In the immediate connection, he warns against these false teachers, who with seeming authority command in respect to meats; *Touch not; taste not; handle not.* The Apostle admits that such observances carried with them *a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility,* that is a voluntary service that was beyond God's requirements, and so seemingly very pious. For this very reason, they were to guard against being brought into bondage. *Wherefore, he says, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, . . .*

*after the commandments and doctrines of men?* Christ had blotted out *the hand writing of ordinances*, therefore they were free from them.

Alford translates this passage, which is made up of verses 20, 21, and 22, all of which form but one sentence, and read; *If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye being prescribed to, handle not, nor taste, nor touch; (which things are all to perish with the using;) according to the commandments and teachings of men?* The rendering of the Revised version is almost identical with this. These renderings show the relation of our text, if possible, more plainly, to the whole passage, in fact that it is an integral part of the whole. Further comment seems unnecessary; but suffer a word from Mr. Barnes, who in his *Commentary*, says; "This passage could with more plausibility be pressed into the service of the enemies of the total abstinence societies, than into their support; but it really has nothing to do with the subject one way or the other."

**TITUS II: 14.** *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

WORDS when first coined are stamped with definite meaning. By long use and wide circulation not infrequently the stamp becomes dim and the meaning lost. The word *peculiar* in the text has suffered from this cause. In Deut. xiv: 2, and the

*LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself . . .* The Hebrew word translated here *peculiar*, means according do Gesenius, “property, wealth, private property.” In the Vulgate, the word is rendered by *peculiarem*, which means, “especial” “ones own.” From this word is derived our word *peculiar*, which originally meant exclusively right, private property. Thus then is the meaning of the word in the phrase, *a peculiar people*, as cited above in Deuteronomy. So in our text the purifying *unto himself a peculiar people*, means: a people for His own possession. All therefore whom Christ redeems He purifies, and thus, they become His own, by right of redemption.

Historically, however, the word *peculiar* has suffered such changes that in modern usage it retains but a shadow of its original significance. In ordinary usage as applied to individuals, it carries with it the idea of strangeness, singularity, oddness, and all in a depreciative sense. The word in our text understood in this modern sense is of course misleading. To avoid such misinterpretation, the authors of the Revised version 1881, translate the passage, *who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works.* The redeemed of the Lord therefore by right of purchase become His own people, and are peculiar in no sense, as the modern meaning of the word would lead us to suppose. But whether the charge of being peculiar

in the modern sense of this word, has not been merited by some Christians on account of the singularity of their conduct, despite the generous and ennobling principles of the Gospel, is quite another question. Yet it must be that while Christianity suffers, in the judgment of some, the intelligent observer will rightly attribute such peculiarity of conduct, not to Christianity but to defects in the natural character of the individual, or to false ideals arising from limited and imperfect knowledge.

*HEBREWS XIII: 17. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

So sadly has this text been misunderstood and misapplied that it has proved the occasion of serious consequences in individual religious experience. The case of John Bunyan, will at once suggest itself, as related by himself in his *Grace Abounding*. In a season of self-examination, this passage and that of Heb. vi: 4, were brought to his mind, and he adds; “Now was the Word of the Gospel forced from my soul, so that no promise or encouragement was to be found in the Bible for me.”

Interpreters are divided as to whether this repentance, or change of mind, is to be referred to Isaac or Esau. Those who hold to the former view, understand that Isaac’s decision was final, in accordance with his words, *he (i. e. Jacob) shall be blessed.*

Esau therefore could find *no place of repentance* or of change in the mind of Isaac; though *he sought it with tears*, as related in Gen. xxvii: 38. Mr. Barnes in his *Commentary* says; "It does not mean that Esau earnestly sought to repent and could not but that he found no place for repentance in the mind of Isaac." Lange, *American edition*, remarks; "The opinion of Del. that Esau is here presented as a type of that unpardonable sin of apostasy, which draws after it inevitable damnation, finds no support in the text itself. But the seeking with tears for the change of mind in his father, and the father's repelling of his entreaties, are recorded in Gen. xxvii: 34-38." According to Meyer, though Esau besought it with tears, he did not succeed in causing his father, Isaac, to changed his mind. Meyer further insists, together with a number of other authorities, on this view, in that "it is most naturally suggested by the context itself"; also that "it yields a clear correct thought, and best accords with the narrative in Genesis."

Bengel refers the repentance to Esau and insists that the word is to be understood in its New Testament sense, as the act of the spiritual man. Calvin, while he refers this repentance to Esau, explains that "the repentance here is not to be taken for sincere conversion to God." He understands it to be "in the sense that he profited nothing. He gained nothing." Alford places himself in line with those who hold this view. "And thus referred to Esau himself," says, "it will mean that he found no way

open to reverse what had been done, by repentance; . . . He might change, but the penalty could not. . . . So that *repentance* in its full sense, had no *place*. We do not mean by it an opportunity to repent in a man's own bosom, . . . for this may be under any circumstances, and this might have been with Esau: but we mean, *a chance, by repenting, to repair.*" Evidently not quite satisfied lest this interpretation should leave the passage open to a possible misunderstanding, he further adds; "It is obvious, that our passage, rightly understood, cannot by any means favor the exclusion of any sinner from repentance."

While the former interpretation is decidedly preferable by rendering the passage clear and intelligible; yet in either case the warning is the same. Let no man trifle with the proffered inheritance held out in the Gospel. In Esau's case, the birthright had been sold. Bitter tears could not reverse the judgment pronounced by Isaac the father. As it was with Esau's birthright so shall it be with the heavenly birthright. A *repentance*, however, sought *sincerely and earnestly*, and yet in vain, is, according to the tenor of the Scripture, as completely unsupposable as is a truely penitent and yet ineffectual seeking of *the grace of God* for the forgiveness of sin within the limits of our temporal life." (So Lange, *in loco.*) Therefore the teaching of the text, in its connection, and specially its warning rightly understood, should not discourage, but rather lead to *repentance*.

I JOHN III: 3. *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

AT first sight, there appears no ambiguity nor anything at all wrong in this text. And yet there are some who understand the phrase, *this hope in him*, to refer to the hope in the heart of the individual Christian, where, by its moral power, it purifies. There are others who refer the words to Christ. While there are still others, who after a diligent study of the text and context, are satisfied that the words, *in him*, should refer to God. Again the phrase, *this hope*, by many is made to refer to the Christian hope in general. It does so refer, yet in this connection, it seems to have a specific reference to something which has gone before.

And so we find in the previous verse, that the Apostle is setting forth the already exalted estate of the children of God. And while it *doth not yet appear what we shall be*, yet, when the *what shall be* is manifested, and the unseen becomes the seen, the blessed consummation shall be, that *we shall be like him* (*i. e.* God) *for we shall see Him* (*i. e.* God) *as he is.* It is to this exalted realization, therefore, that *this hope* specially refers. Whatever this ineffable likeness in its entirety shall be the assurance is; that, the sons of God shall be partakers of it. The true child of God longs to be free from sin, and the certainty of this likeness to the Father, may well inspire his profoundest hopes. And so our text, *Every man that hath this hope in him* (*i. e.* God) *purifieth himself even as he* (*i. e.* God) *is pure.* By

reason of this divine love bestowed, which in turn inspires this well-grounded hope that pierces beyond the veil, the child of God is surrounded by a spiritual atmosphere of warmth and light, which make for purity of heart and holiness of life. (See above ¶ on I John iii: 2. pp. 63, 64.)

## Part III.

### Misquotations.

“ Expressions become stereotyped in public and social prayers—are molded in form, in the former, and multiplied and fixed in the latter. Hence they become sacred, and so are referred by the ill-informed to the bible.”

*Private letter from REV. ELISHA BALLANTINE, LL. D.*

## Part III.

### Familiar Bible Texts Abused on Account of Being Misquoted.

GENESIS III: 4. *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.*

BECAUSE a saying is found in the Scriptures, it is not on this account to be accepted as an essential Bible truth. "Inspiration is concerned," says Mr. Barnes in his *Com. on Job*, "in securing the exact record of what is said, not in affirming that all that is said is true." One of the important canons of interpretation of the Holy Scriptures is to inquire who is the speaker? This saying of the serpent is in direct contradiction of God's words of warning to Eve. Satan not only impugns the truthfulness of God, but in beguiling words, persuades the woman that God was not in earnest. Instead of "dying the death," he said "*your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil.*" The saying;

**"Ye shall not surely die,"**

may be a literal quotation, but the attributing of these words of Satan to God is the grossest form of misquotation; and yet such use has been made of the saying, and its truthfulness assumed because

it is found in the Bible. Such assumption argues, to say the least, criminal ignorance. Besides there are others who heedlessly accept the truth of the saying because it is in harmony with their wishes. From its first utterance these words have been readily accepted and have exerted a most direful influence. The saying lives in the secret thought of the heart, as well as in the outward expression of the tongue. And yet, it must be, that there are few who have the hardihood to publicly palm it off as an essential Bible truth. A single example, however, furnished me by a friend will suffice. Some years ago the doctrine of universal salvation, after taking root in the eastern part of the country, spread rapidly through the west. Churches were organized, and young men without special training entered the pulpit to teach this popular doctrine. It was during this time that a prominent minister of this denomination is reported to have chosen this saying for his text. His so-called sermon was full of Scripture citations, all of which according to his interpretation coincided with and confirmed the words of the text. If the audience had stopped for a moment to consider who uttered this saying, would they not have been forcibly struck with the incongruity and folly of the preacher, in his effort to prove from the Bible the truth of Satan's words?

*LEV. XIII: 45. And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and*

*he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean.*

My attention was first called to the misquotation of the latter clause of this verse, by the late Rev. Eli-sha Ballantine, LL. D., for many years connected as Professor, also for some time as President of the State University of Indiana. He was not only a scholarly man, but a most genial Christian. It was an honor to claim him as a friend. In a private letter dated Dec. 5, 1883, among other examples of this common abuse of the Scriptures, he cited the following, which he describes as; "a curious mixture of Bible and absurdity which has grown in the same soil." The saying as given by him reads;

"Place our hands upon our mouths, and our mouths in the dust crying, unclean, unclean."

By adding to the last clause of our verse, the last clause of Lam. iii: 29, which reads; *He putteth his mouth in the dust*, we have something more of a Scriptural foundation for the above saying, but as a quotation from either one or the other it is a bad failure.

Years ago, when religious experience took deep root in the consciousness of the sinfulness of sin, this saying found frequent expression in the most solemn confession of sin, especially in seasons of spiritual awakening. As a saying therefore, though it have something of a Scriptural foundation yet as a professed quotation it cannot be dealt with too severely.

JOB II. 4. *And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.*

This proverbial saying has been variously interpreted. Dr. Good, as cited by Mr. Barnes, says; "The word *skin* imports the *person* of a man as well as his *property*, the whole living body which it envelopes, as in chap. xviii. 13; xix. 26." He further adds; "It is upon the double meaning of the same term, and the play which is here given to it, by employing the term first in one sense and then in the other, that the gist of the proverb . . . depends." It is true that in early times the skins of wild beasts entered largely into barter or exchange. It is true, also, that the word *skin*, as suggested by Dr. Good, is used in a figurative sense, and means life. With this understanding of this obscure phrase *Skin for skin* as meaning property for life, the proverb is readily understood.

These words it will be noted are the words of Satan, and are not of necessity true. There are some things greatly to be preferred to life. Our inquiry here, however, is directed not so much to the truth or falseness of the proverb as to the gross abuse of quoting the saying;

"Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give  
for his life,"

as having Scriptural authority. To profess to quote any book and foist upon its author, words that belong to another, is a grievous offense. By so much the more grievous therefore is the wrong of making

the Sacred Scriptures responsible for the truth of Satan's utterances. Such offenses are not frequent, and yet they have occurred. (See pp. 119, 120.)

It is reported on good authority that a judge in giving his charge to the jury said; "We have the highest authority for saying, 'Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.'" The public press in reporting the charge, called attention to the fact that these words were the words of Satan, and facetiously remarked; "Now we know whom the judge regards as the highest authority."

A cutting from the New York Observer under date of Sept. 9, 1897, is responsible for the following. Speaking of "the need of discriminating between the things which Scripture details concerning humanity and those which it commends," it adds; "The late Ben Butler was alive to this point, since upon one occasion in Congress, commenting upon the quotation just made by a fellow congressman, 'all that a man hath will he give for his life,' he expressed gratification at learning who it was that 'the gentleman considered his highest authority,' and sat down."

Another example to the point, furnished me by a friend in *a private letter*, is as follows; "I am creditably informed that a preacher in discoursing on the 'love of life' said 'God declares in His Word that, All that a man hath will he give for his life.'" We may smile at such heedless ignorance which attributes to God the words of Satan: but it is an offense that ought not to be winked at.

JOB v: 7. *Yet a man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.*

OUR passage seems to be a proverbial expression condensing as it does a widely accepted truth into a few words. It is connected however with the verse preceding by the word *yet*; and logically it is connected with the verse following. The thought then is, though troubles spring not out of the ground, yet man is subject to them; therefore he should seek God and commit his cause unto him. Mr. Barnes commenting on the words *As the sparks fly upward*, says; "The Hebrew expression here is very beautiful '*as the sons of flame fly.*' The word used means flame . . . the children of the flame are that which it produces; *i. e.* sparks."

The object, however, in calling attention to this passage is to point out the abuse it suffers by being misquoted. How often is heard in the prayer-meeting, instead of the words of the text, the expression;

"We are prone to sin as the sparks to fly upward."

It may seem useless to speculate on the origin of this misquotation; yet possibly it might have originated in the act of hearing the passage read. When Bibles were scarce, there were religious gatherings for the purpose of hearing the Scriptures read. Sometimes in these meetings passages were repeated from memory also by those who were especially gifted in this line. The word, *born* as many would pronounce it, would sound very like the word "prone." And as the sense expressed by this latter word, would

commend itself to the religious consciousness of the hearer, the change could easily occur without going so far back. By the dull hearing of the ear, this change might have occurred even in our own times, though Bibles are ever so plentiful. Then since all trouble originates in sin it would not be difficult for the hearer to substitute in his thoughts the word "sin" for that of *trouble*. And once originated it is not hard to understand how by being often repeated in public and social prayers, this saying would become fixed and widespread, and so displace the true text.

JOB xx; 12. *Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue;.....*

.....  
14. *Yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him.*

ZOPHAR the Naamathite, throughout this chapter portrays the evil estate of the wicked man; and all in furtherance of the argument of the friends of Job, that calamity is an evidence of personal guilt. Job's afflictions, according to the prevalent opinion, indicated that he was a sinner beyond others. With this false sentiment we have nothing to do only so far as it bears on Zophar's argument. In this immediate connection, his words set forth the deceitfulness of sin. By its pleasant taste, it promises wholesomeness to the stomach, but instead, it proves as

the gall of asps. Thus helping his argument that though the sinner may prosper for a season yet calamity would sooner or later overtake him, and thus discover his guilt.

In misquoting the first clause of the text, it is made to read;

“We roll sin under our tongue as a sweet morsel.”

“It is from this passage, probably,” says Mr. Barnes, “that we have derived the phrase, ‘to roll sin as a sweet morsel under the tongue,’ which is often quoted as if it were a part of Scripture.” It is true that the misquotation has but a slight connection with the text, since there are but three words in common between them; but what ought to condemn the saying is, that it is another case of perversion, in which the authority of Scripture is ascribed to the words of a mere man. Besides these words of Zophar are put forth as an argument, in part, to support a false proposition that men are punished in this world for their sins.

Our phrase has sacred associations. In the prayer-meeting it is used as describing the deceitful nature of sin, and so far is made a basis of confession of moral weakness, also as a plea for divine strength. Yet fully persuaded that the words of the text are naught but the words of a man, and are used to support a false opinion, the quotation or rather the misquotation deserves to be severely let alone.

PSALM IV: 6. There be *many that say*, *Who will shew us any good?* LORD, *lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*

In the first clause, the word “any” is not found in the original, and our translators have so indicated by printing it in italics. And yet by the insertion of the word they are responsible for the misquotation of this part of the text. Doubtless it was introduced to make the meaning plainer, but the thought is more correct without it. The question of the centuries has been, and is to-day; Who will show us good? not who will show us any good?

The editor of Calvin’s *Commentary on the Psalms*, says in a note, *in loco*; “The reader will observe that Calvin does not use the word *any*, a supplement which is to be found in our English version. The question is certainly more emphatic without this word. ‘The word *any*,’ says Dr. Adam Clarke, ‘is not in the text, nor anything equivalent to it; and yet not a few have quoted *it* and preached upon the text, placing the principal emphasis upon this illegitimate word.’” To my surprise the Revised version 1881 retains this word and thus lends its encouragement to this misquotation. The word “any,” however, is in italics.

The second clause which reads; LORD *lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us*, is much more seriously abused. By separation from its connection and by misquotation it is made to read;

"Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us,  
and we shall be saved."

Thus dealt with, the sense of the passage is destroyed and is made to take on itself a meaning of its own. Such liberty with the Scriptures, though unintended, is inexcusable.

PSALM XVII: 15. *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.*

THIS verse has been badly misused by being mistranslated (see above page 23); also by being misquoted. Rightly understood the satisfaction to the Psalmist, was to come through the realization of God's presence in this life. The whole Psalm is redolent with prayer for protection. He would be kept as the apple of God's eye. He would have God hide him under the shadow of His wings. The wicked might be contented with earthly, but he could be contented only with present spiritual good. The last clause of our text is often quoted as if it read;

"I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness."

The little word "in" substituted here for *with* of the text, unwarrantably restricts the meaning to a final realization in the future world. This is most contrary to the whole tenor of the Psalm; besides it assumes the meaning of the word *likeness* of the text to be a moral likeness which is contrary to the meaning of the Hebrew word.

Possibly the misquotation finds its origin in a religious sentiment that prevails more widely than many are aware of, that spiritual joy and blessedness are not vouchsafed to the believer here, but are reserved for the hereafter. That somehow it is wrong to expect the peaceable fruits of righteousness while in this present world as such realization belongs to the future world. This thought is deeply embedded in modern Christian consciousness, and finds expression in this phrase "in thy likeness." Such abuse does great injustice to words of the Psalmist. While yet among enemies he prayed for protection. While yet in the path of life he would be satisfied with God's presence.

Referring to this text, Dr. Alexander *in loco* says; "But this excludes too much from the view of the enjoyment God's favor and protection even here, which is the burden of the whole prayer. If the hope of future blessedness, had been enough the previous petitions would have been superfluous. The utmost that can be conceded to this view of the passage is that, by a natural association, what is here said of awaking out of sleep in this life may be extended to that great awaking which awaits us all hereafter."

This misquotation, therefore, not only wrongs the text, but defrauds believers by blinding them to the possibility of a present experience of God's favor to be enjoyed by awaking in consciousness to the spiritual fact of God's presence.

PROVERBS XI: 24. *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.*

WHETHER we recognize an overruling providence or not; our proverb declares what shall come to pass.

There may seem to be short-sightedness and obscurity involved in this contradictory statement, yet in practical life it is found to be true. In the natural world the scattering of seed insures increase; so also in the moral world. The excellency of the proverb consists in its far-reaching application to the moral activities of men. It insures fatness to the souls of those who deal generously, and a corresponding leanness to those who deal niggardly. Though full compliance to this teaching is too often withheld, yet, no one ought to misunderstand its truthfulness.

The right use of this proverb is, therefore, so plain that it is difficult even to imagine how a misquotation ever could have arisen, especially one that tends to the utter perversion of the proverb itself. And yet in point, and purpose, by misquotation it is changed beyond recognition. Instead of a clear statement of a providential law, by way of an incentive to generosity, as contained in our text, it is so abused as to become an unworthy appeal to God that He should be liberal in the disposing of His gifts. Here is the perversion;

“**Giving does not impoverish thee, neither does withholding make thee rich.**

Not only is this a gross perversion of our passage,

but think for a moment of the motive it imputes to Jehovah. As a friend once remarked in respect to this misquotation and the sacred use made of it: "What a plea to offer God that He should be liberal in bestowing His blessings upon us."

PROVERBS XII: 10. *A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked, are cruel.*

Few texts have been so seriously abused as this. Everywhere and always, it is misquoted;

**"A merciful man is merciful to his beast."**

There are only four words here in common with the first clause of our text. It is a matter of surprise, and of literary interest as well, how so gross a blunder could have originated, and also how it could have become so extensively perpetuated. It pervades the ranks of the learned as well as of the unlearned. As a misquotation it has some meaning, but lacks the depth and religious character of our proverb. According to the original, the righteous man from religious principle, cares for the life of his beast. This thought is brought out by contrast with the conduct of the wicked whose tender mercies are cruel. As misquoted, however, the saying is without any religious significance and therefore the comparison is dropped.

The following excerpt is from the New York Observer. It was written by the late Dr. T. W. Chambers, and is introduced here as having an important bearing on the abuse of our text. The memory of

Dr. Chambers is still fragrant among his friends, as an eminent Christian scholar, and as an influential member of the American Old Testament Committee on Revision. The letter is dated Sept. 20th, 1894, and is as follows:

"Messrs. Editors:— Twenty years ago the *Observer* corrected a mistaken reference I made to the good Book. After patiently awaiting an opportunity to reciprocate the favor, at last I find one. In your issue of this date you say; “‘A merciful man is merciful to his beast,’ says the inspired Book.” But it says no such thing. What it does say (Prov. 12: 10) is: “A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast.” This means far more than the common saying which you repeat. It declares that kindness to dumb animals is a constituent part of the righteousnesses which the Scriptures enjoin. It is not only humane or merciful, but an act of justice.”

The Editor adds; “Dr. Chambers has earned his reward, and we rejoice since only once in twenty years has our good friend’s watchful eye detected a misquotation of Scripture on the part of the *New York Observer*. Dr. Chambers is evidently sound on the question of docking the tails of our equine servants. It was in a note upon this horrible and cruel custom that the inexact quotation occurred.”

PROVERBS XIII: 24. *He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.*

DOUBTLESS this *his rod* of our text, is largely symbolical and stands for moral as well as physical discipline. Chastisement carries with it the mean-

ing of kind correction for the sake of reclaiming. Our proverb may thus be interpreted without any violence to its teaching. Prof. Stuart in commenting on this proverb says; "We are not obliged to understand *rod* here in the mere literal sense; but it means at least *correction in some way for faults.*"

The teachings of Solomon's proverbs bearing on parental discipline, are too commonly understood as inculcating physical punishment. The wrong translation of at least one proverb strengthens this popular sentiment. The Authorized version renders Prov. xix. 18; *Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.* The Revised version, however, renders this same proverb; *Chasten thy son, seeing there is hope; And set not thy heart on his destruction.* In this we have the very opposite teaching inculcated. "A saying," says Prof. Stuart, "adapted to angry and passionate fathers, who may be in danger of wreaking vengeance on an offending child."

There is no doubt but that many of the proverbs of Solomon, in their bearing upon parental discipline have been misunderstood and abused. Especially is this true of our text. By universal misquotation it is made to read;

"Spare the rod and spoil the child."

It is astonishing to what an extent the popular mind is influenced by this false saying. The misquotation robs the text of all its wisdom. The loving relation between the father and son is lost sight of.

By this cruel teaching parental responsibility is limited to physical force.

Efforts for the most part to trace the origin of any given misquotation proves almost unavailing. In this instance however, by going back some two hundred years or more, this saying is found in Butler's *Hudibras*, p. II. c. I. v. 844. The book was first published in 1663. The verse reads; "Then spare the rod and spoil the child."

Whether this was a common saying in the time of Butler, or whether the misquotation originated with him, I have no means of determining. There can be no question, however, as to its long and wide-spread use, and baleful influence. Besides, our misquotation is remarkable as an example indicating the possible transmission of these sayings from century to century, since it is repeated to-day, word for word, as in the time of Butler. Little or no influence can be attached to his poem in keeping the saying alive, for though it is witty and learned; and though the poem created a sensation at the time of its first publication, yet it has never been popular. And so this false and mischievous saying must be regarded as having descended from father to son, because entrenched in the memory, as a wise and veritable proverb of Solomon.

PROVERBS XIX: 17. *He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.*

THIS proverb encourages merciful feeling as well as

charitable doing. Matthew Henry, in commenting upon this text says; "Those that have not a penny for the poor, yet may have pity for them, a charitable concern and sympathy." Besides he adds; "If a man *give all his goods to feed the poor*, and have not this charity in his heart, *it is nothing.*" Again, "We must not only pity . . . but give." Genuine charity will find expression in deeds if not in gifts; and really it is something done, rather than something given, that constitutes this loan. Moses Stuart translates the Hebrew for *hath given*, "his work." The meaning of the Hebrew is "*anything done.*" He translates the whole proverb; *He who hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and his work will he reward to him.*

By misquoting the proverb, all the compassion for Jehovah's sake is left out, and it is made to read;

**"He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord."**

Not only is the compassion left out, but the assurance of reward also; as the last clause is never included in the saying. Hence the Divine recognition is, evidently, not appreciated. By such dealing the religious element of the proverb is destroyed.

The following clipping from a newspaper, illustrates our subject; and though lacking in some particulars, yet it will not be difficult to identify the teacher of the Bible class, notwithstanding his full name is not given, nor the name of the city where the church is located.

"The subject before Rev. Mr. Pierson's Bible class

at the Second Presbyterian Church last night was ‘Charity; Giving to the poor’; and the Doctor in a most guileful manner suggested, ‘There is a passage in Proverbs that bears upon the matter. Can any of you recall it?’ This was something so easy that from all parts of the room rose the murmur, in a highly gratified tone of voice, ‘He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.’ And then a wave of deep disgust spread over the assemblage when they learned that no such passage was in existence in Proverbs, or anywhere else.”

This text will doubtless suggest to many the celebrated Charity sermon attributed to Dean Swift. In order to trace the possible origin of this misquotation, diligent search has been made, through the kind efforts of librarians of several prominent college and city libraries for at least a notice of the sermon, for the sake of the exact words used by the Dean; but all in vain. In response to the above inquiry a friend writes;

“Dean Swift was called upon to preach a Charity sermon for a most worthy object, in London. . . . He ascended the pulpit and gave out the text, Prov. xix:17. . . . He paused a moment and then added, ‘My brethren, if you like the security down with the dust.’ This is the story as it is usually told.”

ISAIAH, XXXV: 8. *And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for*

*those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*

THIS notable chapter is full of New Testament ideas. It foreshadows the hopes and joys to be realized in the coming glory of the kingdom of Christ. The language not only appeals to the imagination but satisfies the spiritual nature. Like as it was in the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage, the ransomed of the Lord shall return with songs and everlasting joys upon their heads. And a highway shall be there . . . The way of holiness. It shall be so high and so holy that the redeemed shall walk therein in safety.

So graphic and inspiring are the prophet's words, that almost every verse is familiarly quoted, or possibly misquoted, at least this latter statement applies to our text. While the text as a whole is clear, yet the middle clause is somewhat obscure. Apparently in order to do away with the obscurity, those who originated the misquotation omitted the clause; *but it shall be for those;* and substituted the words; "and the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there." Then to bring out the meaning of the last clause, the words, "and it shall be so plain" are inserted immediately preceding it. Sometimes the words of the text, *and a way,* are omitted. The text then as misquoted would read; "**A**nd a highway shall be there and it shall be called the way of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there.  
**A**nd it shall be so plain that wayfaring men though fools, need not err therein."

Conscientious and learned translators, with the original text before them, may change an accepted rendering provided the change is confirmed by a consensus of opinion of Biblical scholars; but to mangle the text, as above, by adding and omitting clauses is most unseemly and dangerous.

ISAIAH LV: 8. *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.*

OUR text is remarkable for its strength and beauty. Compared with the Hebrew it is so correct that the revisers of 1885, found no reason for changing a single word; and yet many by misquotation think to add to its effectiveness by inserting unauthorized words. By such attempt the very life blood is taken out of the text. This is done by supplying in two instances the word "as," by which, comparisons are introduced where no comparisons were intended. By such mistreatment the whole character of the text is changed.

As it stands the passage contains a direct statement, that God's thoughts are not our thoughts and our ways are not His ways; but by misquotation it is changed to;

"For my thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways as my ways,  
saith the Lord."

By such dealing, it is too evident that the text is

softened down, and its force and meaning taken away.

MICAH iv: 4. *But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree: and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.*

THIS verse forms but a part of the picture of the universal peace that shall prevail in the Messiah's kingdom. *The mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established on the top of the mountains;*

. . . *and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.* Micah gives the main points of this prophecy almost word for word, as it appears in the book of Isaiah. Thus confirming the vision, and strengthening the hearts of the people. In the days of the Prophet, the people must have been slow to credit his words. Even in our own time the vision is still a vision. One reason for this is the mistaken views in regard to the interpretation of prophecy. In the very nature of a vision the picture is seen as a whole; but as a prophecy, it must have a beginning, a middle and an ending. When Christ was born, the proclamation went forth and this peace began. In His life and teachings He enunciated precepts and principles sufficient in themselves to bring about the complete fulfilment of this prophecy; and yet, as the Prince of peace, He was despised; and His teachings were re-

jected. Notwithstanding this, wonderful has been the development of His kingdom in the world. Christ reigns in the hearts of His people to-day, and the beneficence of His government is felt by foe as well as friend.

In the beginning Jesus commanded the sword to be sheathed. As it was in the beginning so it shall be in the ending. But in the meantime, by reason of opposition from without, He commanded the sword to be unsheathed. And so to-day so far as the world enjoys peace, it is an armed peace. A peace to be hailed with joy, but it is not the peace described here. Nominal Christian politics has done much in these latter days, and will do more to promote international peace; but it has its severe limitations. Righteousness on the part of rulers is "a consummation devoutly to be wished"; but as between the ruler and the ruled, and as between nation and nation, we can hardly expect this prophecy, under the present order of things, to be fulfilled in its completeness. Is the prophecy therefore untrue? Is the Gospel therefore a failure? God's plans take in the *last days* as well as these *latter days*. Before the Church can reign with Christ it must suffer with Him. *And the end is not yet.* For thousands of years the Church of God has suffered visible defeats; but according to the word of prophecy, it shall enjoy a thousand years of visible triumph. Wise interpreters may differ in their theories, as to *the when*, and *the how* these prophecies shall be fulfilled, but

such differences matter nothing. The word of prophecy stands and it shall be fulfilled, *for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.*

The object of this study, however, is not so much, the right interpretation of the prophecy, as to call attention to the sometimes incorrect quotation of the words of our text. Not satisfied with the beauty of the picture as delineated by the delicate lines of the prophet, many seek by adding other coarse lines to make the picture more striking. By words of their own, they seek to complete the meaning of the prophet's words. By such abuse, the passage is made to read;

**"But they shall sit every man under his own vine and fig-tree with none to molest or make them afraid."**

So satisfied are they with this emendation, the last clause, the most important of all, is commonly omitted.

Doubtless not a few Bible readers will be surprised to learn that this misquotation is not the correct reading. The familiar phrase "with none to molest" has become so ingrained in the memory and so sacredly associated with the passage that it seems an integral part of it, and so, the sense incomplete without it. Possibly so strong is the feeling with many, that nothing short of reference to their own Bibles will convince them.

**HABAKKUK I:13.** *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: where-*

*fore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously,  
and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth  
the man that is more righteous than he?*

THE first half of this verse is familiar to very many who never seriously considered it in its connection, and consequently they will be surprised to learn that in misquoting, they have been doing violence both to its words and meaning. The prophet uses the words *evil* and *iniquity*, as referring to the wicked acts of intentionally bad men. He declares God's purity and urges it as a plea for the execution of justice. He is almost ready to expostulate with God in the spirit of Jeremiah, who complains; *Wherfore doth the way of the wicked prosper?  
wherfore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?*

Mark how the earnest cry of the prophet in the text, suffers at our hands. Neither Habakkuk nor Jeremiah would have dared so to deal with their Sacred Writings. By our treatment of the text, we not only change its purpose but its words also. Habakkuk reasons with God for the sake of God's honor. In view of the fact of His holiness, in that His eyes were too pure, to look upon evil, he pleads; *wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously,  
and holdest thy tongue?* In the spirit of the martyrs his cry is like unto their cry; *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* While in our use or abuse, of the text, we with the prophet

ascribe holiness to God, yet our ascription takes the form of a confession, and is made the basis of a plea for divine mercy in our own behalf, or in the behalf of those for whom we pray. As misquoted the passage reads;

“We know that thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and canst not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.”

Sometimes instead of the supplied phrase, “with the least degree of allowance” the words, “without abhorrence” are substituted. This is a rare example of a variation in a misquotation. The fact of the correct quoting of these false sayings is quite remarkable. This misquotation is a sad degradation of the spirit and purpose of the prophet who in our passage, forgetful of self, and mindful only of the honor of God, pleads for a righteous display of justice and mercy.

MATTHEW VI: 10. *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

THE Lord’s prayer is so remarkable for its simplicity of language that any portion of it should be misquoted seems improbable. Then its sacredness is a safeguard against undue liberties with the text. Besides the common use of the prayer as repeated in concert, in public worship, in which the leader is doubly careful, is another security against possible changes. And so the prayer for the most part is

correctly repeated. Yet, sometimes, you will hear the last clause of our verse as if it read;

“Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.”

There can be no objection for the change of the word *in* for *on*; but the introducing of the word “done” is an offense.

In the study of these passages, the ever returning question has been when and by whom did these misquotations originate. While in a great majority of instances, no satisfactory answer can be found, yet doubtless in many cases they have been handed down as heirlooms from generation to generation, not as misquotations, but as veritable Scripture. This heedless ignorance, however, cannot justify the abuse whether the wrong is slight as in the present instance, or whether it is quite serious as in many cases.

MATTHEW XVIII: 20. *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

THIS is a universal promise, to those who meet for the organization and furtherance of the Church of Christ, of His presence and authority. It is too often limited to the meeting together of Christians for prayer, when there are but a few in attendance. It has its place here. The pleading of the promise in such circumstances and its realization must drive away all discouragement. But as the connection in-

dicates, it ought to be used for the strengthening of the hearts and hands of all those who meet as representatives and otherwise, for the discipline and up-building of the Church of Christ. The promise, however, is of the broadest application and is only limited by one condition, that the *two or three are gathered together in His name.*

The promise of the text is so explicit that one would hardly expect that any attempt would ever be made to make it more effective, and yet it is misquoted as follows;

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst and that to bless.”

But in this, as in all such cases, the tendency, of supplied words, is to weakness rather than strength. It is in the province of the interpreter to explain even by paraphrasing to make a passage clear; but he who professes to quote from the Bible should be loyal to its text and neither add to, nor take from it a single word.

MATTHEW XXVIII:19. *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

SOMETIMES you will hear clergymen in administering the sacred rite of baptism, misquote the latter clause of the text by saying;

“I baptize thee into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

A good elder of a well-known Presbyterian church,

in giving an account of a public immersion, reported the Baptist brother as misusing Scripture by saying, "I baptize thee into the name of the Father; instead of *I baptize thee in the name of the Father.*" Neither was he entirely satisfied when informed that the Greek preposition stood for either *in* or "into" and that probably the "into" was nearer correct.

As a marked exception, our text offers an occasion for justifiable misquotation. The chief reason is that the word "into" in this connection, gives a deeper meaning than the word *in*. This is certainly so, if the word *in* is limited in its meaning to the authority for administering the sacred rite, as it is too often. The word "into" carries with it the additional idea of dedication into communion and fellowship with the triune God." As another authority with equal truth remarks; The word "into" includes "an objective admission into the covenant of the Redeemer." Feeling the need of something more than the word "in" to bring out the meaning of text, Mr. Barnes says; "To be baptized in the name of the Father, etc, is the same as to be baptized unto the Father." Alford in his *N. T. for Eng. Readers*, translates; *into*. Singularly enough, therefore, it is well to misquote our text by following the best authorities, for the sake of the depth brought out by the word "into;" or, better still to adopt the reading of the Revised version which translates; *Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

JOHN III: 16. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

IT seems a shame that so grand a passage should ever, even in the slightest degree be marred, and that by the hands of friends. Unconscious abuse is still abuse, and our text sometimes suffers in this way. It was an occasion of surprise, some years ago, when my attention was called to the common misquotation of this text. By an admission of a strange word in falsely quoting the last clause, it is made to read; “*That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but might have everlasting life.*”

There is nothing in the original to justify the use of the word “*might*.” Besides it weakens the sense by introducing an element of possibility, when all is probability and certainty. The text is plain and strong when in this clause it declares; *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

JOHN xvii: 3. *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

THIS text teaches the possibility of knowing God. And this possibility, as we learn from the verse immediately preceding is based upon the possession of eternal life. The verse reads; *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* The gift accepted, the knowledge is assured. The knowledge

possessed implies an intimate relation with God, and withal, partakership of His holiness, through supreme love and obedience. Alford defines this knowledge as that living reality of knowledge and personal realization,—that oneness in will with God, and partaking of His nature, which *is* itself life eternal.” In the same connection he quotes Irenæus as saying; “The beginning of life is the result of the participation of God: and participation of God is the knowing God and enjoying His goodness.” Says Bengal in commenting on this text; “Knowledge in the matter of salvation is of the greatest moment.” Meyer remarks; “This knowledge of God here desired . . . is the *zoe aionios*, in that it is its essential subjective principle, . . . even now in the temporal evolution of eternal life, and still yet after the establishment of the kingdom, in which faith, hope, and love abide . . . the fundamental essence of *which* is in truth nothing else than that knowledge, which in the future *aion* will be the perfected knowledge.” These citations are made to aid in apprehending something of the possibilities revealed in this passage. Possibilities open to the young and those comparatively ignorant as this world estimates ignorance.

It is sad that this text so rich in Spiritual teaching, should seriously suffer by being misquoted. By such treatment the teaching is condensed into a phrase which has little in common with the text. In fact the misquotation reverses the meaning by

making the life eternal depend upon the knowledge, instead of, as the text teaches, that the knowledge is dependent upon and possible, on account of the life eternal.

The misquotation is;

“To know thee whom to know aright is life eternal.”

This saying seems to have a meaning, yet as a quotation it is destructive to our text, and is mischievous in the extreme. Spiritual life must precede spiritual knowledge. Read the context and learn that it was for these living—knowing—ones that Christ prayed.

I COR. II: 9. *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

THIS text belongs to a class of passages to which, in quoting, words are added for the sake of completing the sense. The phrase volunteered in this instance is “to conceive” and is added to the fourth clause. The text thus changed is made to read;

“But eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

Such use of the text is an evident attempt by amplification to make the sense more emphatic. It may be said that these words fall so naturally into the

sentence that they create no suspicion, and really do no harm. The universal law is that dilutions weaken. And then, the words have no place in the original, and so are foreign to the text. No excuse therefore, can justify their presence.

In common with other texts this suffers from being misinterpreted as well as misquoted. (See pp. 105, 106.) Its words so graphically describe the possibilities of the unseen world, that man, after being informed to the contrary, ask, where is the wrong of appropriating them to this use? The answer is, the wrong consists in giving to the passage another meaning from that which it teaches. Besides by this act the Christian Church is robbed of a text whose right meaning needs to be emphasized in modern Christian thought. That these unseen things so far as the wisdom of the world can discern, these things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, have been revealed, and are freely offered in the Gospel.

But, says the objector, does not the writer know that this very text is a free citation from the prophet Isaiah, and that the Apostle appropriates the words rather than the sense? The writer does not know this, neither does anyone else. Paul may have quoted from some other writing. (See Meyer *in loco*.) Admitting, however, that he had the words of the prophet (See Is. lxiv: 4. lii: 15.) in his mind, as an inspired Apostle was he not justified in using them as he did? "Such minglings together of clauses from various parts," says Alford "are not unexampled

with the apostle, especially when, as here, he is not citing *as authority*, but merely *illustrating his argument by Old Testament expressions.*"

GAL. VI: 7. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

THE teaching here is plain and the application easy. Because God reigns by law in the spiritual as well as in the natural world, He cannot be mocked. Whatever men may think, God's laws are immutable and they fulfil His designs. The very seeds themselves though sown secretly and with a covert purpose of deceiving will in the harvest disclose their nature. And herein is the warning, to sow the flesh is to reap corruption. The exhortation is *Be not deceived*, the law is fixed, to sow wind is to reap whirlwind. But the Apostle not only warns; but especially encourages the Galatians, under the same law, to sow good seed. *He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.* He further exhorts; *And let us (including himself with them) not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

But too frequently this is not the use made of the text. By being misquoted, it is robbed of its meaning and its purpose changed. How often we hear in public prayer;

**“Thou canst not be deceived, neither canst thou be mocked.”**

By such words, the Apostle's warning and encour-

agement contained in this latter clause are lost sight of or ignored. The whole gist of the text is changed.

The religious use made of the above saying, is acknowledgment that any attempt to cover up evil in our hearts would be futile; followed by a confession of sin on our part. This is well, but it is not the teaching of this passage. Not only so, but it destroys, by substitution, the right meaning and use of the text.

*PHIL. IV: 7. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

THIS passage is sometimes quoted as a benediction. At other times it is made to take the form of a prayer for the closing of religious services. Its use in either case is unjustifiable. Many who have heard it so quoted from their youth up will be surprised and ready to demand the authority for the above statement. To which it may be replied, the best authority is the passage itself. Turn therefore to it, and, from its immediate connection, be convinced.

Some years ago when my attention was first called to the misuse of this text, I was quite as indignant as any one of my readers now can be. The words were so appropriate, and so in keeping with the sacred use to which they were put, that they seemed no other than a benediction. So true is this that it is a matter of no surprise that they have been widely adopted and continue to be used as a formal benediction, or as

a prayer, in the dismissal of congregations. In all honesty, however, the text is neither one nor the other. From its connection we learn that it is a promise that the “unspeakable” peace of God shall come to those who by prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving make known their wants unto God. The conditions fulfilled, this peace which passeth understanding is realized without the interposition of a third person to pronounce it.

Admitting all this, still the question may be asked, cannot these words be used by accommodation as a benediction? or at least in the form of a prayer in place of a benediction? In a general sense it may be answered; the use of Scripture by accommodation is not necessarily unlawful; yet in this case, and in almost every other, is it not wrong to take the passage without warrant, out of its connection, and put it to a purpose for which it was not intended? Appropriated as a benediction, both pulpit and pew will accept it as such, and lose sight of its true meaning. Then the need of this blessing coming through such a promise, ought to be a sufficient incentive for a vigorous protest against such abuse. Besides the Church at large cannot afford to have the Bible practically robbed of so valuable a text.

COL. II: 21. (*Touch not; taste not; handle not;*  
22. *Which all are to perish with the using;)*

THE above in a certain sense is a Bible text, but being the words of man they carry with them only

human authority. When shall we learn to discriminate between that which is, and that which is not, of divine authority? Too much honor has been bestowed already upon this verse under the head of texts misinterpreted; (See page 108) but as a familiar quotation the saying;

“Touch not, taste not, handle not,”

deserves further notice on account of the gross wrong of ascribing to it divine authority. From the pulpit and the platform, this saying, has been freely used, and though in a good cause, yet most unjustifiably.

Singularly enough in our times these words are religiously used to influence the consciences of men to adopt the practice of abstinence from intoxicating drinks; but in the time of the Apostle Paul, the saying was employed by Judaizing teachers, to bind the consciences of Hebrew Christians to continue in the observance of Jewish ordinances, which Paul taught were done away in Christ.

The saying itself is rather catching and impressive, and so far as its words are concerned there can be no harm in quoting it; provided, always, that care is used in explaining who uttered the saying, also their purpose in uttering it. Such explanation, however, would rob the precept of all its power.

Let no friend of the righteous cause of temperance be troubled because of the loss of this text. Directly and indirectly the Bible abounds in teachings bear-

ing upon this subject. Besides questionable supports injure rather than aid a good cause. The grievous offense, however, here, is the ascribing Scriptural authority to the utterances of mere men.

COL. III:11. *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all.*

THE latter clause of this verse suffers from a misinterpretation founded on a misquotation. In the public reading of the Scriptures, too often there is a lack of proper emphasis, and clearness of expression. In the present case it is easy to understand how the ear would fail to catch the word *and*, leaving the clause to be treasured up in the memory and afterwards to be quoted as;

“But Christ is all in all.”

As thus quoted it is taken out of its connection and applied or rather misapplied to the believer. And though it becomes a precious thought, yet mark the injustice done to the text.

In this connection the Apostle enunciates the broad and fundamental principle, which is world wide in its application, that artificial distinctions have no place in the Church of Christ, that all national, ecclesiastical and social claims are nothing. In becoming new creatures in Christ we are lifted to a common level, where, as the text declares, in this re-

newed state, there is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all. A principle most contrary to the world's judgment. Says Bengel *in loco*; "Every nation, as it prefers some other to itself, so again, under every pretext, prefers itself to all the rest, . . . Faith removes this distinction. . . . A barbarian is not a barbarian but Christ's. Christ is *all*, and that too *in all* who believe. The new creature is in Christ, ver. 10; Gal. vi: 15."

A further misapplication of this clause, but certainly not a common one, where the words are correctly quoted, but misapplied, is noted in *Biblical Notes and Queries*, as follows; "To say," says the writer, "that Christ is all *and* in all to the believer, we should alike pervert the apostle's meaning; and the people's English." He further adds; "The writer remembers once hearing just this proposition stated as a theme of a sermon on the above text. But the careful professor, under whose direction the theme was prepared, justly took exception to it, as an error in interpretation, and a blunder in expression." In pointing out the correct meaning of the clause, the writer adds; "No matter whether we be Gentiles or Jews, . . . if we have put on the new man we are henceforth nothing, for Christ is *all*; we are henceforth equal, for Christ is alike *in all*." In this missionary age this essential unity of believers cannot be too much emphasized, and especially the reason for it, as set forth in our clause. Again that the civilized Anglo-Saxon can be lifted to a higher level

by helping to elevate the heathen African can only be understood through faith in Christ. Such wisdom is foolishness to the world.

II THESS. III: 1. *Finally brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord, may have free course, and be glorified even as it is with you.*

In his first epistle, Paul commends the faith of the Thessalonians, and their hearty reception of the Gospel at his hands. Now at Corinth, and foreseeing the opposition to his work, the Apostle writes this second epistle; and as in our text, asks the prayers of the brethren, that the Gospel might be glorified even as among them.

The second clause of this passage is another example, where in quoting, a word is added to emphasize the meaning. The word supplied here is "run," and the misquotation reads:

"That the word of the Lord may have free course, and run, and be glorified."

Our clause as correctly translated in the Revised version reads; *that the word of the LORD may run and be glorified.* This corresponds with the margin of the Authorized version. It is somewhat remarkable that in the misquotation of this passage, the supplied word "run" is the correct rendering of the original which means "to run, to spread quickly." So that even the right, becomes the wrong word, because superadded, and so without authority.

The translation of our clause is sufficiently clear;

but if the correct rendering of the Greek seems more desirable, why not adopt the reading of the margin? or which is better, the reading of the Revised version? where the whole verse is rendered; *Finally, brethren, pray for us; that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as also it is with you.*

I TIMOTHY VI: 10. *For the love of money is the root of all evil.*

THIS passage is commonly quoted as if it read;

**“Money is the root of all evil.”**

There is so much of truth in this saying that it passes current as veritable Scripture. Money in itself is good and rightly used becomes in every way an occasion of good. To the possessor by such use, it becomes a sign and seal of a liberal and generous character; but when abused it becomes to him a fruitful source of temptation and of every kind of evil.

This, however, is not the teaching of the text. It is not the money but the love of it that destroys character both among the rich and the poor. The crying evils traceable to it cannot be numbered. And then in interpreting the text, it is wrong to take it out of its connection and treat it as a proverbial saying. The theme in the Apostle's mind, was Christian contentment. He was warning Timothy against the error of those who professed godliness for the sake of gain. And yet he says, but in a very different sense; *But Godliness with contentment is great gain.*

Then in keeping up the connection, he condemns avarice in the Christian, lest it deprive him of temporal as well as spiritual gain that comes through this godliness with contentment. Hence he warns against the love of money that brings with it temptations, snares, and many hurtful lusts. *For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith and piercēd themselves through with many sorrows.* Therefore he solemnly exhorts Timothy, and with him all Christians; “*Flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*

From the above it will be readily seen that this misquotation like many others is a text destroyer. It does violence to our passage by robbing it of its substance, and leaving naught but a dry and empty husk.

II TIMOTHY I: 12. *For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

THE middle clause of this verse offers a notable exception to the rule that supplied words detract from the meaning of the passage thus misquoted. The word supplied in this case is the preposition “in” which changes the clause to;

“**For I know in whom I have believed.**”

While the introduction of this word is unjustifiable,

yet instead of detracting, it adds to the passage. In the words "in whom" the knowledge possessed seems to acquire a deeper and more spiritual meaning. This would be well if it were justified by the context. Alford remarks on this clause; "hardly to be *formerly* expressed so strongly as De Wette, '*in whom I have put my trust,*' though the meaning, in the spiritual explanation is virtually the same; the metaphor here is that of a pledge deposited, and the depositor *trusting* the depositary; and it is best to keep to the figure."

Without spiritualizing therefore or adding to the text, there is a certain freshness in the Apostle's declaration when he says, *For I know whom I have believed* (that is him whom) *and* (by reason of this knowledge) *am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* The Revised version 1881, recognizing this as the Apostle's meaning, translates; *for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

It is recorded of Rev. Dr.——, for many years pastor of the . . . church of . . . , when on his death bed appropriate passages of Scripture were being repeated in his hearing, he was quiet and attentive, till this passage was quoted as if it read; "For I know in whom I have believed," when he quietly said; "*For I know whom I have believed.*" Evidently he had given thought and study to this passage.

Faithfulness to the mind of the Spirit is not more dependent upon correct translation, than upon right interpretation and correct quotation. Failure in either case is destructive to the meaning and understanding of the Word. As friends of the Bible, therefore, we are called upon to exercise a jealous care in dealing with the Oracles of God as transmitted in the **HOLY SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.**



## Index of Texts.

The convenience of the divisions of our printed Bibles into chapter and verse, for the sake of easy reference, can scarcely be overestimated; but as to how far these divisions are responsible for interrupting the sense, and for the misinterpreting and misquoting of individual texts, is quite another question.

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## Index of Topics.

Lord Campbell is credited with saying; “So essential did I consider an Index to be to every book, that I proposed to bring a Bill into Parliament to deprive an author who publishes a book without an Index of privilege of copyright: and, moreover, to subject him for his offences, to a pecuniary penalty.”

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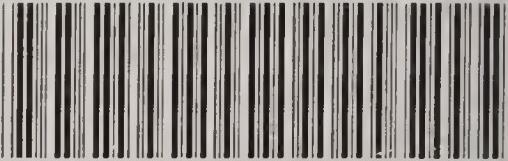
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